

GAMBIT

How to Crush Your Chess Opponents



**An inspiring guide for
the modern attacker**

Simon Williams

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Introduction

I was asked a while back by a depressed grandmaster, "What is the point in playing this stupid game? Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. It is all the same to me; why do I put myself through the pain?" Chess certainly sounds depressing from his point of view!

I expect losing a game in under 25 moves to a player rated a lot lower did not help his attitude, but never fear, it is not all doom and gloom.

Surely, we play chess to make ourselves feel good? Obviously we might lose now and again but that is part of the game: without the lows we would not get the highs. The games presented in this book are meant to be fun.

I am sure the winners enjoyed playing these games. And I hope that you, the readers, will get pleasure from going over the games. After all, chess is meant to be a fun game, a factor that far too many players forget about. Do we play chess to put ourselves through six hours of torture where we might end up losing a rook ending? I do not think so, unless you're a masochist, that is. The most fun that I get from a game is when I crush my opponent quickly. Chess, after all, is much better when you win.

Nowadays, there are too many boring games, games which are drawn after 8 moves, games where all the pieces get swapped off on move 10 ... yawn. I want to see games with action! Bang! Crash! There goes another piece...

Botvinnik once said, "It is peculiar but a fact nevertheless, that the gamblers in chess always have enthusiastic followers." I personally do not find it that peculiar. I would much rather go over a game played by Tal than one by a 'correct' player, as Tal's gambling attitude was so much fun to watch. Gamblers, for better or worse, are entertaining.

I had two main aims in mind when writing this book. One aim was to show you some

fascinating games that I have enjoyed. The other aim was to help you to play attacking chess like the winners in this book. Hopefully, this book will help you understand how to hack your opponents up quickly!

I personally prefer to attack rather than to defend. I expect this is the case for the majority of chess-players. It is certainly easier to attack as it puts the other player under pressure straight-away. Make him sweat as early as possible. That is my philosophy. I shall now provide some tips on attacking and defending. In order to attack and defend, we need to use different skills but the most important thing to do is to calculate properly.

Attacking

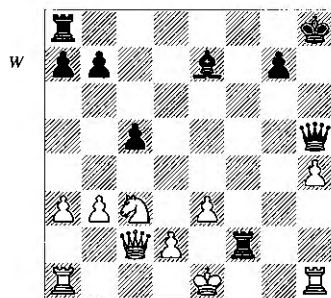
Calculation is really the key to a successful attack. You must analyse whether the attack is going to bring you success.

However, not all lines need to be calculated. You need to follow your instinct in many cases but if you do have a choice between a couple of critical moves which may lead to a successful attack, always start by analysing the line which you think is most critical first. If this line leads to success then there is no need to look at anything else. If your original move does not work, then move onto the next move which you think is most critical.

Obviously, humans differ in the way they think, so people's definition of critical moves will be different (I believe that this is one of the reasons why chess is so fun). If you are looking at something completely stupid this will quickly become clear – hopefully!

It is really a process of elimination and this is why computers are so good at chess as they can eliminate lines extremely quickly. It is

then important also to look at your opponent's most critical or most obvious response. For example:



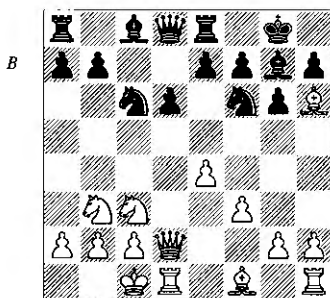
I had this position as Black against a strong grandmaster. The first line that I had to look at before sacrificing on f2 was whether he could capture the rook. It works out that he loses if he does capture the rook so other responses should then be analysed. As you can see, it was important to start the process of calculating by looking at White's most obvious and critical reply, which was capturing the rook. Then move on to your opponent's next most critical move and so forth.

If you cannot find an adequate reply to one of the opponent's responses then you should reconsider your first move.

Defending

In general, a person who is trying to defend their position should try to exchange pieces as this can relieve some of the pressure. It is obviously important to try to work out which pieces should be exchanged. If possible, when defending, try to swap off the queens as they usually pose the most danger.

However, it is not a good idea to exchange a piece that defends your king. Take the following position as an example:



Black's dark-squared bishop does a very good job of defending the dark squares around the kingside, so swapping it off is clearly a bad idea, and ...♗h8 is the correct move, keeping the bishop for defence.

One thing that surprised me when writing this book was the amount of possible resources that I found for the defender. Some of these resources I only found when working with a computer in the background, but it still goes to show that an accurate defence can make life very difficult for the hacker.

Another piece of advice for the defender is that when your position is ghastly, you might as well capture as much material as you can. At least, if you do not lose immediately, you have a chance to convert your material advantage. "It is always better to sacrifice your opponent's men!" (Tartakower).

You may have noticed the high number of wins by White included in this book. I am not sure whether this is a coincidence or due to the fact that in top-level chess, it is much easier to destroy your opponent with the white pieces!

1 Opening to Middlegame

In chess, it is important to play according to your style.

If you are happy playing chaotic, unclear positions, then aim to stir things up quickly. For example, a good opening choice might be 1 e4 c5 2 a3!?. Even though this opening might not be totally sound, the positions which arise in the early middlegame are unique and complicated.

If you prefer a quieter game, it is better to pick a more relaxed opening. For example, the English Opening may be a good choice as it often leads to a middlegame where manoeuvring is very important.

My own results improved dramatically when I switched from 1 e4 to 1 d4 as I prefer to play sharp chess so 1 e4 was not doing me any favours.

Essentially, if you want to improve your results, it is important to pick an opening that you enjoy playing. If you play your chosen opening repeatedly, you will begin to understand the middlegame positions and even sometimes the endgame positions that arise from this opening. Certain openings lead to certain positions and you will get to grips with these positions often through experience and also by understanding why you are playing particular moves in the opening.

Do not just memorize lines straight from a book. Ask yourself: "Why is this the correct move? What is the idea behind this move?" By doing this, you will obtain a better understanding of the position and hopefully your results will improve as well.

The games given in this chapter demonstrate opening ideas which lead to promising positions. Often a well-played game appears to be flawless from the observer's point of view. This is because the winner understands where the game is heading, i.e. what the correct plans are in particular positions. I have tried to explain some of the basic ideas behind the players' moves so that you have an idea as to why they played that move and what they may be hoping to gain for the rest of the game.

Game 1

Judit Polgar – Ferenc Berkes

Budapest 2003

French Defence, Burn Variation

I thought it would be appropriate to kick things off with a Judit Polgar game. Judit always plays very sharp chess in the opening and normally chooses the most critical lines. I would recommend younger players to play this way as it is especially important for juniors to start their chess career by playing sharp, popular openings. Popular openings are normally well-liked for a reason; quite simply, they are the best way to start the game.

I can understand why older players may feel compelled to pick less stressful openings, as

they probably have less time to learn all the theory, but there is no excuse for youngsters. Learn the critical lines!

The game that follows is very instructive and shows how Judit uses the initiative that she gets from the opening to launch a deadly attack. I especially like the way that White just gets on with the job in hand and does not bother with any 'safety-first' moves. After all, checkmate is the end of the game!

The attacking ideas shown are fairly common and White makes it all look easy.

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♟f6

This move is considered to be more solid than 3...♗b4, after which some exceptionally sharp positions can arise. However, in this game 3...♟f6 is made to look very unsolid!

4 ♗g5

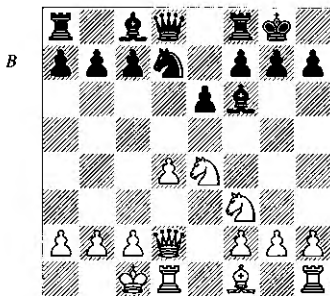
4 e5 is White's other main move. After 4...♟fd7, 5 ♟ce2!? is one of Anand's favourite moves. White wants to guard his centre with his pawns by playing e3 and f4.

4...dxe4

Later on in Game 12, Grishchuk-Brynell, we shall see another crushing game in the variation 4...♟e7 5 e5 ♟fd7 6 h4!?, where White sacrifices a pawn to open the h-file.

5 ♟xe4 ♟e7 6 ♟xf6 ♟xf6

6...gxf6 is a move favoured by Ulf Andersson but White has good chances of a quick win in this line as well; for example, 7 ♟f3 b6 8 ♟c4!? (aiming at Black's pawn-formation on f7 and e6, with ideas of sacrificing) 8...♟b7 9 ♟e2 c6 10 0-0 ♟c7 11 ♟h4! f5 12 ♟xf5 exf5 13 ♟g5 with a very dangerous attack, S.Williams-Andersson, European Ch, Warsaw 2005. Only a defender of Ulf's abilities would be able to hold such a position!

7 ♟f3 0-0 8 ♟d2 ♟d7 9 0-0-0 (D)

Judit picks one of the most aggressive lines, which perfectly suits her style. As stated in the Introduction it is very important to find positions you prefer playing so that you can steer the game towards that type of position. Castling on opposite sides and going straight for the opponent's king is the critical test of the opening.

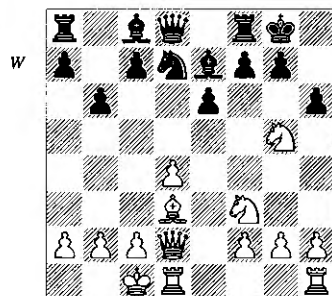
Black, on the other hand, hopes that the two bishops will work to his advantage later on in the game. This will only be a factor if White's attack can be kept under control...

9...♟e7 10 ♟d3

Naturally aiming the bishop towards the h7-square.

10...b6 11 ♟eg5!

A new move at the time, and a very dangerous one. Judit has developed all her pieces so it is time to take some action and Black's king is the logical place to start. 11 h4 ♟b7 12 ♟h3 is another plan but the text-move is more to the point.

11...h6 (D)**12 ♟h7+!**

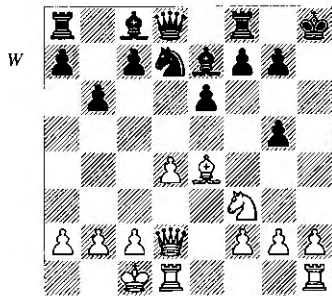
An important idea. For the attack to be successful, ♟eg5 must be followed up by h4 with the idea of trying to force Black to capture on g5, when hxg5 will open the h-file towards the black king. Therefore, it is obvious that White benefits from having Black's king on the same line as the white rook. Such subtle ideas will make the difference between a win, loss or draw.

This reminds me of a quote about positional play from the famous Russian trainer Dvoretsky: "try to improve your position as much as you can before doing anything". A similar idea is shown here: always think of any tactical ploy that can be used to improve your attacking chances by even the smallest margin.

12...♟h8 13 ♟e4 hxg5?! (D)

An easy mistake to make as White's next move is far from obvious.

13...♖b8 is slightly better, although White's attack looks very dangerous; for example, 14 h4 ♘f6? (14...♙g8!?) 15 ♘e5 (here they come!) 15...♙xe4 16 ♘xf7+ and White wins.



Do you think that you can find White's next move? It is all to do with opening the h-file, but remember to consider Black's best defensive plan.

14 g4!!

A brilliant idea. A common mistake that a lot of players make is to get too carried away with their own attack. By doing this, they tend to forget about their opponent's defensive ideas. An important defensive resource for Black here is to play ...g4, which keeps the h-file closed. With the text-move, White rules out this idea. So the moral of the story is that you should try to place yourself in your opponent's shoes and think about what resources are available to him. Then, if it is possible to stop his ideas, stop them! Black's idea was that 14 ♙xa8? fails to 14...g4+, when White's knight is lost because of 15...♙g5. The immediate 14 h4? is met by 14...g4+.

14...♖b8 15 h4 g6?!

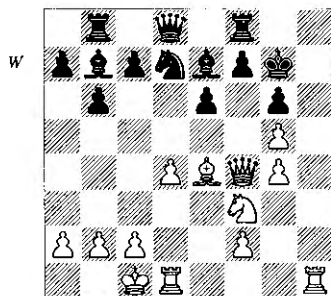
15...gxf4 is a better try, although Black's position looks very unstable after 16 g5 ♙g8 (16...f5!? 17 ♗f4 gives White an attack) 17 ♗f4 f5 18 ♙c6 ♙f7 19 ♗xb4 ♙d6 20 ♙de1.

16 hxg5+ ♙g7 17 ♗f4

The big guns fly over towards Black's king. Even though Black is a piece up, his position is too cramped to be able to cope with White's attack.

17...♙b7 (D)

17...♖h8 18 ♖xh8 ♗xh8 19 ♘e5 ♗e8 20 ♖h1 +— and 21 ♗h2 is coming.



White's threats along the h-file are very menacing, but what is the best way to continue the attack?

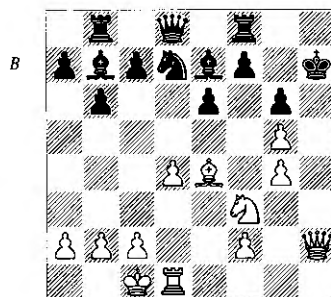
18 ♖h7+!

A very nice touch that gives White an important tempo, which can be used to transfer the white queen over to the h-file.

18...♙xh7

Or 18...♙g8 19 ♙dh1 f5 20 ♘e5 +—.

19 ♗h2+! (D) +—



It's all over now.

19...♙g8

19...♙g7 20 ♗h6+ +—.

20 ♖h1 ♙xg5+ 21 ♘e5 ♗xg5+ 22 f4 ♗xf4+ 23 ♗xf4 ♙xe4 24 ♗xe4 1-0

Black throws in the towel, as his position is hopeless.

Game 2

Arkadij Naiditsch – Jan Gustafsson

European Ch, Dresden 2007

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Marshall Attack

This game is a classic case of great preparation which wins the game. I am not normally a fan of games that are won at home and not at the board, as they tend to lack any real fight, but this game does involve a very nice attack by Black.

Just watch how Black sacrifices both of his rooks to get to the white king. Moves 23 and 25 are both quite logical as every other black piece is attacking. Therefore, it is only the black rooks that need to join in.

Since games can sometimes be won simply by good preparation and hard work, make sure you know your theory – or something like the following might just happen to you!

1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♟c6 3 ♟b5 a6 4 ♟a4 ♟f6 5 0-0 ♟e7 6 ♟e1 b5

Nearly every chess professional has had this position at some point in his life.

I do not know much about these positions as I have always avoided them, but it seems to me that the position is quite symmetrical and closed for now. This normally leads to a quiet manoeuvring game as it is hard to break through quickly. One thing worth noting is that White's light-squared bishop is developed outside his pawn-structure. This is a particularly good piece and White should avoid exchanging it without a good reason.

7 ♟b3 0-0

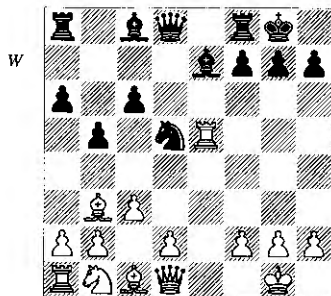
7...♟a5? is obviously a mistake here as it allows 8 ♟xe5 ±.

8 c3

White plays this move so that his bishop can retreat to c2 after ...♟a5 but it does allow the Marshall Attack, a very sharp choice of opening which has never been refuted.

Players really have to know their theory when accepting gambits. If you have time, it is well worth going over the recommended book lines with an analysis engine, because even authors make mistakes!

8...d5!? 9 exd5 ♟xd5 10 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 11 ♟xe5 c6 (D)



The starting point of the Marshall Attack. So what has Black got in return for his pawn? Mainly two things: he has better development and White has no pieces near his king to contribute to its defence.

12 ♟e1

I am not writing an opening book, so I won't dwell too long on the critical opening lines. I shall just mention that in the main line White allows Black's queen to h4, viz. 12 d4 ♟d6 13 ♟e1 ♟h4 14 g3 ♟h3. Black's pieces are flying over towards the kingside, but White has many defensive resources. After 15 ♟e4 g5 (stopping 16 ♟h4), one recent try is 16 ♟e1 ♟f6 17 ♟d2!?, as in Motylev-Tkachev, Kazan 2005.

12...♟d6

Aiming the dark-squared bishop at White's king, and in particular the sensitive h2-pawn.

13 g3

This move stops Black's pressure on the dark squares but it also opens up new weaknesses. Just look at those juicy light squares around the white king! Indeed, these are the key theme in the game. 13 d4 transposes back to the main line after 13...♟h4.

13...♙f5

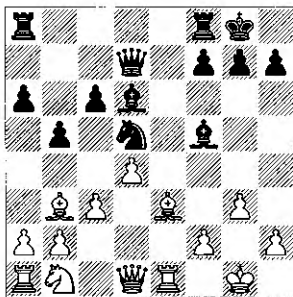
Other moves have been played but this looks perfectly logical, developing and exerting pressure on the light squares. Other moves include 13...♙h3 and 13...♙d7!?, aiming to land the black queen on the weakened h3-square.

14 d4

White cannot do without this move. It frees up the c1-bishop, makes a claim for the centre and stops the annoying 14...♙d3, which would severely cramp White's game.

14...♙d7 15 ♙e3 (D)

B



Which rook should Black move to e8 and why?

15...♖ae8

Black has developed all of his pieces. All that is needed now is to attack the white king! It is best to leave the rook on f8 so that it can be used behind the f-pawn, as we shall see.

16 ♘d2 ♙g4 17 ♙b1 ♙f5

A tacit offer of a draw, which maybe White should accept. A draw is certainly much better than what happened in the game!

18 ♙c2?

Apparently this move, at the time the game was played, was recommended in the latest *Informator* as a way to get a slight advantage. In actual fact, it seems that this move leads to a forced win for Black – bad timing for Naiditsch indeed! 18 ♙c1 has been tried as a winning attempt, but Black's counterplay is still adequate; for example, 18...♙e6 19 ♘d3 ♙g4 20 ♘g5 ♙g6 21 f3 ♙xf3! 22 ♘xf3 ♙xg3! with a brilliant attack, Shabalov-Aronian, Calvia Olympiad 2004.

The rest of the game is well worth looking at: 23 hxg3 ♙xg3+ 24 ♙f2 ♙h3 25 ♙e2 ♙g2+?! (25...♙g2+! wins) 26 ♙d3 ♙xf3 27 ♙xd5 cxd5 28 ♙c2 ♙e8 29 ♙d2?! (29 ♙f4!?) 29...♙d3+ 30 ♙b3 ♙b8 31 a3 ♙g2 32 ♙d1 ♙e8 33 ♙b1 ♙c4+ 34 ♙c2 ♙ee2 35 b3 ♙c8 36 ♙b2 h5 37 a4 h4 38 axb5 axb5 39 ♙a3 ♙f5+ 40 ♙c1 h3 41 ♙a8+ ♙h7 42 ♙d8 h2 43 ♙a8 ♙g1 44 ♙h4+ ♙g6 45 ♙a6+ f6 46 ♙a7 ♙xd1+ 47 ♙xd1 h1 ♙+ 0-1. A nice attack!

18...♙xc2 19 ♙xc2 f5

Black needs to open up White's king or get a pawn to f3, which will be a permanent thorn in White's side. All of a sudden, you can see just how useful the rook on f8 will be.

20 c4

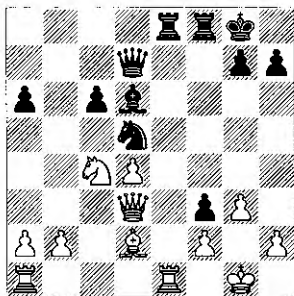
Still blindly following the recommended plan, but watch how quickly White's position falls apart.

20...bxc4 21 ♘xc4 f4 22 ♙d2 f3!

This is the new move, even though it is perfectly logical. Black wants to put the queen on h3 and then give mate on g2! The other suggestions given in *Informator* lead to an edge for White; for example, 22...♙h3 23 ♙d3 ♙c7 24 ♙xe8 ♙xe8 25 ♙e1 ± and 22...♙c7 ±.

23 ♙d3 (D)

B



White's idea is to meet 23...♙h3 with 24 ♙f1, stopping the mate on g2. Is there any way Black can stop White's queen from reaching f1?

23...♙e2!!

That's the one! This brilliant rook move blocks the white queen from reaching the f1-square.

24 ♖xe2

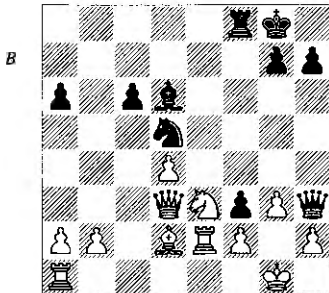
The only move.

24... ♖h3 25 ♖e3 (D)

25 ♖xf3 could have been tried but it also leads to disaster: 25... ♖xf3 26 ♖xd6 ♖f6 27 ♖ae1 h6 28 ♖e3 ♖xe3 29 fxe3 ♖g4 30 ♖e2 ♖xh2! 31 ♖xh2 ♖xg3+ 32 ♖g2 ♖xd6 and Black's connected passed pawns will prove decisive.

After Black's next move White resigned and not without reason. The obvious move is 25... ♖f6 with the idea of playing 26... ♖h6 and mate on h2 but after 25... ♖f6 White can play 26 ♖e4 with counterplay on the e-file. Is there any other way that Black can manoeuvre the rook to the h-file?

25... ♖f4!! 0-1



If you found this move, well done. White resigned as there is no decent defence against 26... ♖h4!!.

Game 3

Ivan Sokolov – Alexei Shirov

Sarajevo 2005

Queen's Gambit, Semi-Slav

What I like about this game is the way White keeps playing very active, troublesome moves, which eventually crack Black's defence.

Many weaker players assume that strong grandmasters always calculate from the beginning of a combination to the end. This is not always the case, as this game shows. It is normally best to play practical moves which create as many problems for the opponent as possible.

When a player is faced with an onslaught of attacking moves and there is only one defence, the pressure often gets too much. This game demonstrates just that. So when attacking, calculation is crucial but it is also important to use and follow your instinct.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♖f3 ♖f6 4 ♖c3 e6 5 ♖g5 dxc4

The ultra-sharp Botvinnik System, a line which leads to complicated, unbalanced positions. Shirov has scored well with this line as it suits his style. This goes to show how important it is to pick an opening that you are comfortable with. The opening reflects how the rest of the game will pan out.

However, in this game it does not work out well for Shirov as his opponent has prepared a sharp gambit line in the opening. Ivan Sokolov, like Shirov, plays well in complicated positions.

6 e4 b5

Black has to hold on to the c4-pawn. White reacts against Black's big queenside by playing in the centre and on kingside.

7 e5 h6 8 ♖h4 g5 9 exf6!?

This slightly offbeat line may have taken Shirov by surprise. A clever choice by Sokolov.

9 ♖xg5 is the main move which leads to some mad complications. For example, Game 19 (Ivanchuk-Shirov) continued 9... ♖xg5 10 ♖xg5 ♖bd7 11 exf6 ♖b7 12 g3 c5 13 d5 ♖b6 14 ♖g2 0-0-0 15 0-0 b4 16 ♖a4 ♖b5 17 a3 exd5 18 axb4 cxb4 19 ♖e3 ♖c5 20 ♖g4+ ♖d7 21 ♖g7!! – a brilliant idea. It is now thought that Black is OK in that line, but imagine facing this move over the board!

9... ♖xh4 10 ♖e5

White relies on this massive piece to put pressure on some weak points in Black's position,

especially f7 and c6. Throughout the game this knight plays a key role

10...xf6 11 a4

Attacking on both sides of the board.

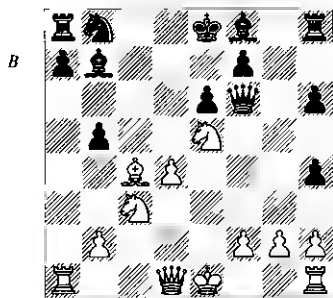
11...b7 12 axb5

An idea which Pia Cramling made popular. White is aiming to open up the a4-e8 diagonal towards the king on e8. 12 e2 is the other possibility

12...cxb5

12...c5!? is Black's main alternative, trying to keep the queenside closed, while also hitting out against White's centre. Play may continue 13 e2 g7 (13 h3!? 14 f3 xf3 {14 hxg2} 15 gxf3 g7?! {15 .cxd4 is unclear} 16 b6 ± P.Cramling-Hermansson, Swedish Team Ch 2002) 14 Qxc4 0-0 15 dxc5 ± Azmaiparashvili-Chernin, European Rapid Ch, Neum 2000.

13 e4! (D)



White has a development advantage whilst Black's king is still stuck in the middle, so it is logical to search for ways to open up lines against the black king

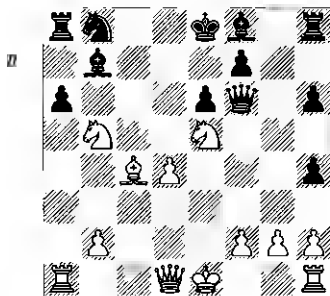
13...a6

No one has dared to play 13...bxc4? so far and for good reason; for example, 14 Wa4+ d8 (14 .e7 15 Wb4+ +-) 15 Wa5+ c8 16 Ma4! (when attacking it is useful to use all your pieces, remember, reinforcements should be brought in) 16 a6 17 Qb5 xb5 18 Wxb5 d6 19 xc4+ c7 20 Wc5 +-.

13. d6 seems to be Black's other main option; for example, 14 g4 Wf4 (14...Wg5!?) 15 xb5+ c7 16 c3 d7 with unclear play,

P.Cramling-Aagaard, Rilton Cup, Stockholm 2004/5

14 Qxb5! (D)

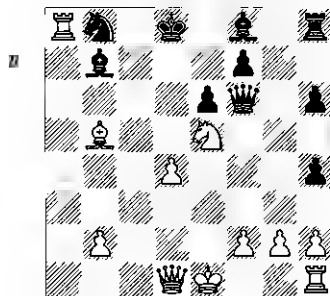


The opening White has chosen demands active play; otherwise Black will consolidate and remain material up. Therefore, White continues to grab the initiative. To paraphrase Steinitz's famous expression, when a player has the initiative he must play as actively as possible, as otherwise he will lose that initiative. When one has sacrificed material, one must be alert to ways to give the opponent as many problems as possible

14...axb5

The only other game in this line continued 14.. b4+ 15 c3 xc3+ 16 bxc3 xg2 17 g1 h3 18 Wa4+ + (18 xa6!? is also possible) and White can be happy, P.Cramling Ornstein, Rilton Cup, Stockholm 2000

15 xb5+ d8 16 xa8 (D)



16...♙xa8?

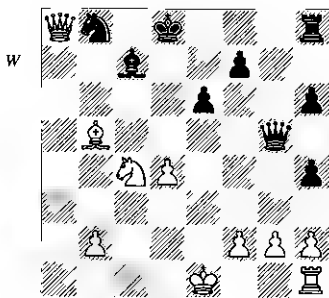
This gives White a big attack 16...♙b4+! is better. While this may leave the bishop on b4 as a target to ♖a4, it is the critical option. After 17 ♖f1 ♙xa8 18 ♖a4 ♙xg2+! Black's counter-attack gives him good play. The principle at work here is that in sharp positions, the defender should always look for ways to return extra material in order to regain the initiative. 19 ♙xg2 ♖g8+ 20 ♖f1 ♙d6 is roughly equal, as White's king is in as much danger as Black's, if not more. It is surprising that such a sharp player as Shirov does not jump at the chance of aiming for this position.

17 ♖a4 ♙d6

17. ♙xg2 is going one step too far, as after 18 ♖a7 ♙c8 19 ♙d7+ ♙xd7 20 ♖xd7+ ♙b8 Black's king is looking rather naked. 21 f3! (blocking Black's bishop from the defence of his king) 21...♙xf3 22 ♖b5+ ♙a7 23 ♖f1 and White wins.

18 ♙c4

White decides that his knight is better than Black's dark-squared bishop so he keeps the pieces on the board. It is always worth considering which piece is better when an exchange is possible. If your piece is better, do not exchange it, if it is worse, then exchange it!

18...♙c7 19 ♖xa8 ♖g5 (D)

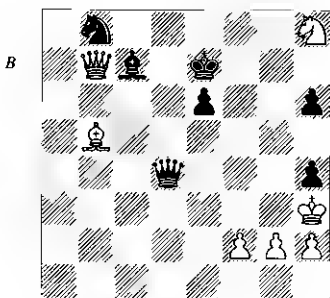
White has nothing obvious here so he must think about improving the position of his pieces. The white queen in particular is rather out of play in the corner. What should White do?

20 ♖b7!

I really like this move. White has faith in the combination of his queen, bishop and knight, so he allows Black to capture his rook on h1. Black loses a lot of time in doing so. In the meantime, White can position his pieces on their best squares. Again, this comes back to using the initiative as actively as possible. A word of warning: calculation is always the key ingredient to any successful attack.

Clearly 20 0-0? is bad because of 20...♖xb5 20...♖c1+ 21 ♙e2 ♖xh1 22 ♙e5 ♖c1!

Black defends well, he must return the rook in order to save his king. 22...♖f8? 23 ♙c6+ ♙xc6 (23... ♙d7 24 ♙xb8++ ♙e7 25 ♖xc7+ +-) 24 ♖xc6 ♙e7 (24...♙c8 25 ♖a8+ ♙b8 26 ♙c6! ♙c7 27 ♖b7+ ♙d6 28 ♖d7#) 25 ♖xc7+ ♙f6 26 ♖e5+ ♙g6 (26...♙e7 27 ♖c5+ +-) 27 ♙d3+ f5 28 ♖xe6+ ♙g7 29 ♙c4+ and 30 ♖e7+ is around the corner.

23 ♙xf7+ ♙e7 24 ♙xh8 ♖xb2+ 25 ♙f3 ♖c3+ 26 ♙g4 ♙xd4+ 27 ♙h3 (D)**27...♖b6?!**

Black has defended well up to this point but his eagerness to swap the queens lets him down here. He must play actively with 27...♖d6, although he is still worse after the simple 28 g3 as the black king is more exposed and the knight on b8 is terrible.

28 ♖c8! ♖xb5 29 ♖xc7+ ± ♙d7 30 ♙g6+ ♙f6 31 ♙xh4

At last the complications have died down and it is clear that White has very good winning chances. White has the extra pawn, safer king and more active pieces. The game finished:

31... ♖d3+ 32 f3 ♜e5 33 ♖c1 ♠f7 34 ♗b2+
e5 35 ♗b6+ ♜g7 36 ♜g3 ♖c4 37 ♗g6+ ♜f8

38 ♗f6 ♜g8 39 ♜g6 e4 40 ♠f4 exf3 41 ♜e6
1-0

Game 4

Vladimir Malakhov – Sergei Volkov

European Clubs Cup, Panormo 2001

French Defence, Tarrasch Variation

White plays a very smooth game here, which is instructive to play through.

In a closed position all of White's pieces are slowly moved to their most ideal squares. The tactical skirmish that follows is the logical follow-up to White's play.

Again, this shows how important it is to launch an attack at the right time. An attack will only work if your pieces are placed on good squares.

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♠d2 ♠f6 4 e5 ♠fd7 5 f4

White's aim in this opening is firstly to gain space in the centre and then to use this space to start an attack against the cramped black king. Black, on the other hand, must play actively, with the aim of breaking up the white centre

5...c5

The pawn-breaks c5 and d6 are two of the most important moves available to Black in the French. Without these breaks, Black would never be able to contest White's strong centre

6 ♠gf3

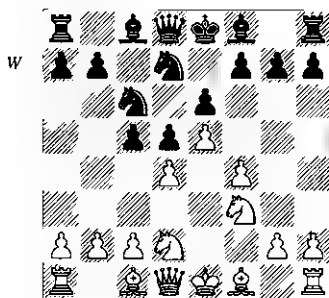
6 c3 is White's other main option, keeping the pawn-structure intact. In my opinion this is a difficult line for Black to play against. One line which has become popular recently is 6...♠c6 7 a3?, stopping a check from Black's bishop on b4 and aiming to expand on the queenside with b4.

6...♠c6 (D)

6. cxd4 looks like the right plan, as Black damages White's strong central pawn structure. The plan that Black chooses in the game leaves White's centre in one piece, allowing him more time and space to turn his forces to another part of the board.

7 ♠b3 c4?!

Gaining space on the queenside, but pawns can't move backwards! After this move, Black



will find it very hard to attack d4, which is holding up White's centre.

8 ♠bd2 b5

Black has given up on attacking the centre and concentrates his forces over on the queen side. The game now becomes a race. White will push through on the kingside, while Black will attack on the queenside. White's stronger pawn centre and safer king will give him better chances

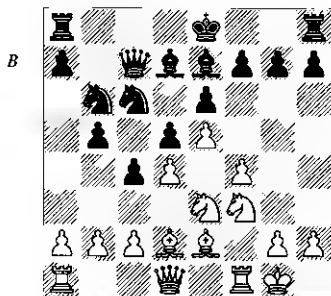
9 ♠e2 ♠b6 10 ♠f1!

This is the start of some nice manoeuvring from White. In closed positions, this is the key to success.

Each player should be thinking where their pieces should go and only when they have reached those squares, should they start forcing matters.

White's knight is positioned much better on e3, where it supports the f5 advance, which is the most common way for White to gain space and attack the black king in closed French Defence pawn-structures.

10...♠d7 11 ♠e3 ♠e7 12 0-0 ♗c7 13 ♠d2 (D)

**13...f6**

Black tries his other pawn-break. Another plan which Black often plays is 13...f5, aiming to keep the kingside closed. Unfortunately, after ...f5 White always has the pawn-break g4, which will open up lines on the kingside.

14 ♖e1

White is placing all his pieces on their optimum squares. Before a fire is started, wood needs to be arranged in the right place!

14...0-0 15 ♙h4 ♜h8

15...♙e8! is sensible; the bishop wants to land on e4 via g6, which is a much better square than d7. Bishops belong outside their own pawn-structure, this is to avoid one's own pawns getting in the way of their pieces. 16 exf6 (16 g4 ♙g6 17 f5 exf5 18 gxf5 ♙h5 19 e6 ♜f4! ♞) 16 gxf6 (16 ♙xf6 17 ♙xf6 ♞xf6 18 ♙e5 ♙) 17 f5 e5! 18 c3 ♙f7 =

16 ♜h1 a5

Again, a better plan is 16...♙e8! In general, pieces should be put on their best squares before pawn advances are considered.

17 ♜d2 b4

Put yourself in White's position. To me, it seems that the only white piece not on its ideal square is the e2 bishop. How can the positioning of this piece be improved?

18 b3!

I like this move as it closes the queenside down and lets White's bishop find a lovely square on d3. The 'natural' move here is 18 c3, but this would give Black chances to attack down the b-file.

18...c3 19 ♜e1

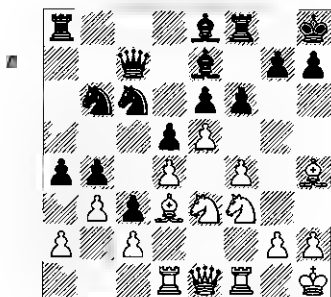
Moving another piece over to where Black's king is.

19...a4 20 ♙d3

Aiming directly at the black king. In nearly every French position, White's light squared bishop is best placed on d3.

20...♙e8

At last, but now White has control of the b1-h7 diagonal.

21 ♞d1 (D)

White has got a nice advantage from the opening. Black has minimal chances to break through on the queenside whilst White has positioned his pieces for the kill on the kingside.

With his last move, White aims to keep the queens' rooks on the board after...axb3, axb3. White has correctly assessed that if Black then plays...♙a2 he won't achieve anything as the c2-pawn is well defended.

21...f5

Attempting to block things up, but White always has g4 up his sleeve.

22 h3

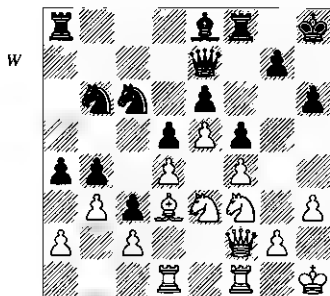
Preparing g4, opening the b1-h7 diagonal for White's bishop towards Black's king.

22...♙h4 23 ♜xh4 ♜e7 24 ♜f2

White has more chances to launch a successful attack if the queens are kept on the board.

24...h6 (D)**25 g4!**

25 g3 is another plan, with the idea of playing 26 ♜h2 and 27 g4, when the f-pawn is defended by the white queen. This is important so that White can recapture on g4 with his h-pawn.



25...fxg4 26 Qxg4

It is great to see how the white army is working together, ready to attack the black king. Black's pieces are also stranded over on the queenside, which will make a successful attack on the black king more likely.

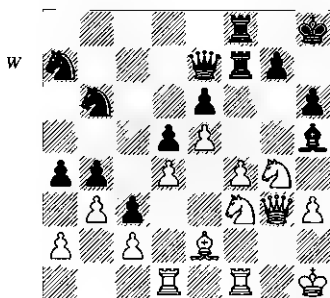
26...Qh5

26.. Qxf4 27 Qe3 Qf8 (27 Qf8 28 Qf6 g5 29 Qxg5! Qxf1+ 30 Qxf1 +-) 28 Qxh6 Qh5 29 Qg4 ±.

27 Qg3 Qf7 28 Qb5

Pushing a black piece further offside.

28...Qa7 29 Qe2 Qaf8 (D)



Which square is weakest around Black's kingside and how should White exploit it?

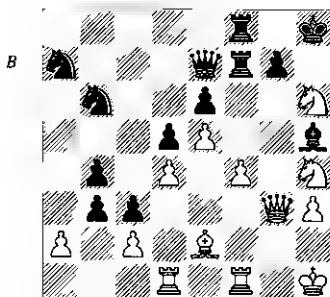
30 Qh4!

Black's major weakness is the g6-square so White aims to land a knight there. This also has the added benefit of guarding the f4-pawn with the rook.

30...axb3?

30. g5! may have been worth a try as Black really needs to mix things up before he is suffocated. After 31 fxg5 (forcing matters, another idea is 31 Qg2, which looks sensible as it keeps the tension, but at least Black has pushed White's knight back) 31.. Qxg5 32 Qxf7 Qxf7 33 Qg1 White has the better chances. Just compare the positioning of both players' pieces. Black has two knights stuck on the queenside which cannot aid the defence of his king.

31 Qxh6! (D)

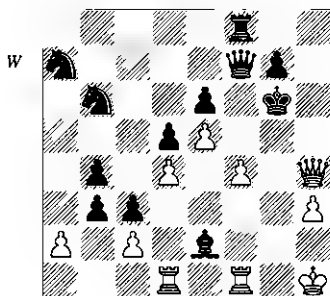


It is time for the final blow.

31...Qxe2 32 Qg6+ Qh7 33 Qxf7!

A flashy way to finish things off.

33...Qxf7 34 Qh4+ Qxg6 (D)



Can you find the checkmate? It shouldn't be too hard as each white move is a forcing one. The king is walking to its own death.

35 ♖g1+ ♜f5 36 ♖g5+ ♜e4 37 f5+ ♜e3 38 ♖g3+ ♜f3+

Or 38 ♜f2 39 ♖gd3#

39 ♖xf3+!

Removing Black's last defensive piece

39... ♜xf3 40 ♖f1+ ♜e3 41 ♜f4+ 1-0

It is not often that such a strong grandmaster as Volkov is made to look so weak. This is mainly due to the simple, logical moves made by Malakhov

Game 5

Veselin Topalov – Alexei Shirov

Linares 1998

Grünfeld Defence, Exchange Variation

This game is remarkable because of Black's 47th move, which is something very special. In what looks like a quiet ending Black comes up with a real shocker.

To me moves like Black's 47th come from another dimension. Mere mortals like ourselves can only dream of playing such a move. However, for Shirov, moves like this are a common occurrence.

It is clear from the start that both players have a good understanding about the ideas behind the opening. Black goes for a clamp on the light squares, which gives him a certain amount of control over the position. White counteracts this by using his pawn-majority in the centre and kingside.

The game boils down to whether Black can diminish White's initiative and win the ending. There are some ideas that Grünfeld players must know about which are demonstrated here.

1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♟c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♟xd5 5 e4 ♟xc3 6 bxc3

The scene is set. White takes over the centre whilst Black hopes to knock it down bit by bit with active moves.

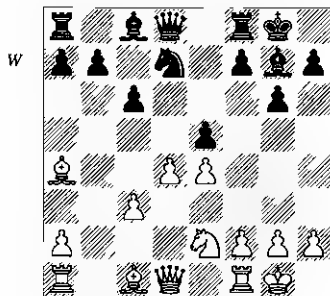
6... ♟g7 7 ♟b5+ c6 8 ♟a4 0-0 9 ♟e2 ♟d7 10 0-0 e5 (D)

Black can rarely go without the pawn-breaks ...e5 and ...c5 in the Grünfeld. White's centre must be attacked!

11 f3

Other options are 11 ♟e3, reinforcing the d4-square and therefore the centre, and 11 ♟a3, but the text-move is also logical as it reinforces the centre.

11... ♜e7 12 ♟e3 ♟d8



Both sides are positioning their pieces on the best squares. Before active operations can take place, it is nearly always logical to get one's troops to their ideal posts.

13 ♜c2

13 ♜c1 is probably better, leaving the c2-square free for White's a4-bishop. The queen may also have a route over to Black's kingside via the c1-h6 diagonal later in the game.

13... ♟b6 14 ♟b3 ♟e6 15 ♟ad1

15 f4 leads to a dynamically equal position, for example, 15. exf4 16 ♟xe6 fxe6 17 ♟xf4 ♟c4 (a beautiful square for the black knight)

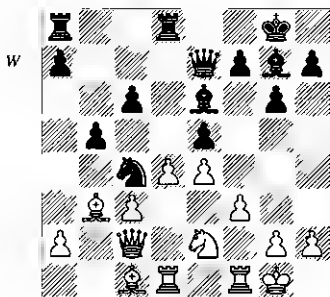
15... ♟c4!

Black places his knight on a big square which will be a pain for White for the foreseeable future. This idea is common practice.

16 ♟c1 b5! (D)

Cementing the knight on its lovely square and setting up a later expansion on the queenside.

17 f4!



White reacts well by advancing his central pawns. It is always important to have a plan. It is often said that a bad plan is better than no plan at all. And at least if it goes wrong, you can learn from your mistakes, as you will gain a better understanding of the consequences of your actions.

Topalov understands full well that he needs to attack, otherwise, he will be crushed on the queenside due to Black's control of the light squares.

17...exd4 18 Qxd4

With this move White aims to disrupt Black's hold of the light squares by dislodging Black's light-squared bishop. 18 cxd4 is also logical, trying to hold the centre, yet it would seem that Black has won the opening battle as White's central pawns are more of a liability rather than an asset. 18...a5 19 a4 (19 f5 gxf5 20 exf5 Qd5 and White will find it hard to make any progress on the kingside) 19...f5! 20 e5 Wf7.

18...Qg4 19 Qde1 Wc5 20 Qh1 a5

It is very risky for Black to give up his dark-squared bishop by 20 Qxd4?! as his king will be left open to attack. After 21 cxd4 Wxd4 22 f5 I prefer White's chances.

21 h3?

This is the kind of natural move that can get many players into a lot of trouble. White flicks his h-pawn forward one square, probably without much thought. However, Black's bishop is placed much better on d7. On g4 it is more likely to be trapped after White plays a later f5. A better plan was 21 a4! bxa4 22 Qa2, keeping the queenside closed for the sake of a pawn.

21...Qd7 22 a4 bxa4 23 Qa2 Qe8!

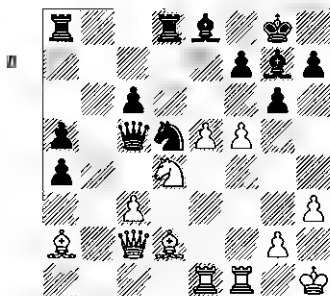
Opening the d-file and giving more protection to Black's king.

24 e5

24 Wxa4 allows Black to get a slight advantage via 24...Qb6 25 Wb3 a4.

24...Qb6 25 f5 Qd5 26 Qd2?! (D)

Two better options were 26 f3 and 26 f6, when White can at least hope to drum some play up against Black's kingside.



Black would like to exchange at least one of White's active pieces so his attacking chances are extinguished. How does Black achieve this?

26...Qb4!

White's light-squared bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal is always a menace for the black king, so Black swaps it off.

27 Wxa4 Qxa2 28 Wxa2 Qxe5 29 fxg6

29 Qe4 leaves Black with a big advantage after 29...Qg7 30 Qg5 Qd5.

29...hxg6 30 Qg5 Qd5! 31 Qe3 Qd6 32 Qe2 Qd7

Not 32...c5? because 33 Qf3 embarrasses Black's pieces on the e file.

33 c4 Qxd4 34 cxd5 Qxe3 35 Wxe3 Qe8

35...Wxd5?! is risky as it allows White to start an attack on the dark squares with 36 Qf6 Wb5 37 Qf4! intending 38 Qh4. White then has a very dangerous initiative.

36 Wc3

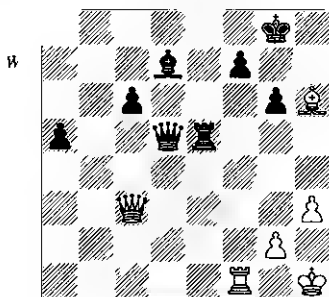
Or 36 Qc1? Wxd5 37 Qf6 Qxh3!

36...Qxd5 37 Qh6

37 Qf6? is just a mistake in view of 37...Qe2

+

37...♖e5 (D)



38 ♖f3

Not 38 ♖e1? ♕xh3! -+ or 38 ♖b1? ♕xh3!
39 ♖xh3 ♖h5 -+.

38...♗c5

The opposite bishops offer White serious drawing chances. Much will depend on how widely split Black's passed pawns will be.

39 ♖a1

Better than 39 ♖xc5? ♖xc5 40 ♖a3 ♕e6 41 ♕d2 ♖c2 42 ♕xa5 ♕d5 +

39...♕f5 40 ♕e3 ♖f6 41 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 42 ♖a2+ ♖d5 43 ♖xd5+?

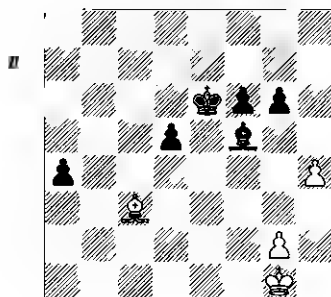
43 ♖a3 preserves excellent drawing chances. After 43...c5 44 ♖xa5 ♕xh3 45 ♖d2, the tempting 45 ♕xg2+? 46 ♖xg2 ♖h5+ 47 ♖h2 ♖xh2+ 48 ♕xh2 g5! 49 ♕g2 ♖f7 50 ♖f3 leads to a position that the six man tablebases tell us is a draw, while after 45...♖e4 46 ♕h2 ♕f5 47 ♖d8+ ♕h7 48 ♕f8 Black has trouble holding on to his c pawn and his king is weak

43...cxd5 44 ♕d2 a4 45 ♕c3 ♖f7 46 b4 ♕e6 47 ♕g1 (D)

Things have calmed down and it seems that a long battle will take place. Do you think that you can play like Shirov?

47...♕h3!!

Quite shocking! Black calculates that the resulting ending is won for him. This move shows that calculation is important at every stage of the game, even in harmless opposite-coloured bishop endings. So never relax when playing, and always look out for ways to change the course of the game to your advantage.



Basically, Black wants to bring his king to e4 as quickly as possible. He therefore needs to move his bishop so that it doesn't obstruct his king, and also creates a threat. The only move that fits the bill is the outrageous text-move. The only problem – and the reason why most players would fail even to consider the move – is that the bishop is of course *en prise*. However, as the course of the game shows, if White captures the bishop, then Black gains another passed pawn and an extra entry-square for his king (f3).

Instead, 47. a3 gives White good chances to survive after 48 ♖f2 a2 49 ♖e3 ♕g4 50 g3 ♖f5 51 ♕d4. 47 ♕e4 creates a threat to the g2-pawn (like Shirov's actual choice), but also obstructs the black king, and extensive analysis shows that White can hold after 48 g3 ♖f5 49 ♖f2

48 gxf3

White has to accept the sacrifice. 48 ♖f2 ♖f5 49 ♖f3 ♕xg2+ (here we see how putting the bishop on h3 created a threat) 50 ♖xg2 ♖e4 51 ♕xf6 d4 52 ♕e7 ♖d3 53 ♖f3 ♖c2 54 ♕b4 d3 -+.

48...♖f5 49 ♖f2 ♖e4 50 ♕xf6

50 ♖e2 a3 51 ♕d2 d4 52 ♕a1 f5 is also winning for Black

50...d4 51 ♕e7 ♖d3! 52 ♕c5 ♖c4 53 ♕e7

Or 53 ♕xd4 ♖xd4 54 ♖e2 ♖c3 55 ♖d1 ♖b2

53...♖b3 0-1

Triumph! There are too many pawns for White to deal with, for example, 54 ♕c5 d3 55 ♖e3 ♖c2 56 ♕b4 a3 -+.

2 Keeping the Initiative

When attacking, it is important to use the initiative. If the initiative runs out, often your position becomes worse. This chapter is all about keeping that energy flowing. As Max Euwe once said, “... in chess – as in any conflict – success lies in attack.”

When you have the initiative, it is often best to keep attacking in order to put your opponent firmly on the back foot. Try to cause your opponent as many problems as possible because if he cannot cope with the difficulties of his position, more likely than not, he will crumble under the pressure.

In chess, it is quite common for one side to sacrifice a pawn early on in the game to get the initiative. The compensation can come in many forms, such as active pieces, dangerous pawn(s), safer king, open lines for pieces, etc. The problem in this situation is if the player in charge of the play cannot ‘cash in’ his initiative for something. If the initiative fades, then he will simply be left a pawn down with a difficult position to defend.

I have seen this often happen in the King’s Gambit. White sacrifices a pawn early on to take control of the centre and develop his pieces quickly. Black has to defend for some time but bit by bit White loses control of the initiative and in the end, Black holds on to his pawn which he later converts into a queen in the endgame.

Therefore, when you have the initiative you must play as energetically as possible. Keep on throwing pieces and pawns at your opponent’s king and do not give him time to breathe!

The following games demonstrate that the initiative can be used as a major weapon in any game of chess. In the right hands, it can win the game.

Game 6

Mircea Parligras – Baadur Jobava

European Ch, Antalya 2004

Pirc Defence

White’s greed gets the better of him in this game.

The first dubious decision Parligras makes is when he starts to grab pawns over where his king is castled. In modern times strong computers have made this tactic popular but it is still very difficult for humans to play in such a way. It is easier to attack rather than defend in a practical game of chess, since a single mistake while defending can lose the game. On the other hand, the attacker can sometimes get away with making a mistake, as his initiative may still prove dangerous.

Black’s strong lead in development and open b- and c-files are the main reasons his attack

works in this game. The way that Black continued the attack here is very thematic: he literally throws all his bits over at the enemy king. A nasty thing for White to face! Black also calculates very well; as I have stressed before in other games, this is the key to successful chess.

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♖f6 3 ♘c3 g6

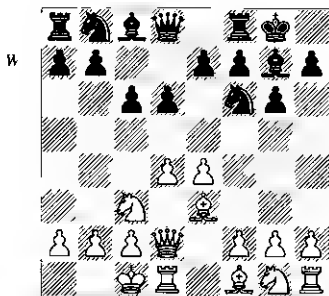
The Pirc is a risky opening. Black lacks space but relies on striking out against White’s centre. This is a good choice of opening for dynamic, counter-attacking players.

If you want to see a model Pirc game from White’s point of view, refer to Game 27, Plaskett – Murshed, in Chapter 7.

4 ♙e3 ♗g7

Black shows his hand early by committing his kingside. 4. c6 is a flexible choice. By leaving the bishop on f8 Black hopes to save a tempo later on, as he can meet the plan of ♖d2 and ♕h6 with ... ♕xh6.

5 ♖d2 0-0 6 0-0-0 c6 (D)



Now that the players have castled on opposite sides, the plans of action should be clear. Black has slightly weakened his kingside by playing the move ...g6 so White should target this by the standard manoeuvre h4, ♕h6, h5, etc., with a big attack. Black has a pawn mass on the queenside which should be launched at the white king in the hope of destroying its cover

7 ♖b1

A waiting move which improves White's king safety. Yudasin Anand, Munich 1991 continued instead 7 f3 b5 8 g4 ♖a5 9 ♖b1 with an unclear position.

7...b5

7 ♖a5 gives White an extra option, which is 8 ♖d5!, when we can see another reason why it is useful for White to have his king on b1 8...♖xd2 (8. ♖d8 9 ♖xf6+ ♕xf6 + and White has removed an important defender for the black king, the knight on f6 which gave extra support to Black's h7-pawn) 9 ♖xf6+ ♕xf6 10 ♖xd2 ±

8 f3

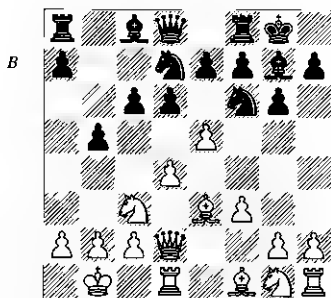
To support White's centre and stop ...♗g4.

8...♖bd7 9 e5? (D)

This plan looks dubious as Black is quite solid in the centre. White should get on with

the standard plan of launching the h pawn at Black's king. It seems that White has the upper hand in the attack if he follows this plan. If you have the choice between a simple plan which looks good and a more complicated one which also looks good, it is nearly always correct to pick the simple plan. Why complicate matters when there is no need to?

After 9 h4 ♖b6 10 ♕h6 ♕e6 11 ♕xg7 ♖xg7 12 h5 White is leading the race, J.Hall-Giacco, La Coruña 1993



9...b4!

A good move that involves a pawn sacrifice. Black is more concerned about opening up lines towards the white king, and rightly so!

10 exf6

10 ♖ce2 ♖d5 ♖.

10...bxc3 11 ♖xc3?!

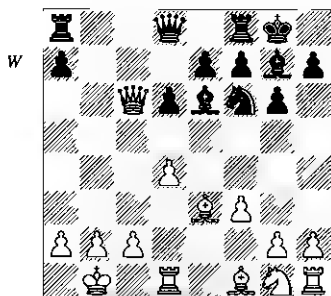
This second mistake leaves White struggling. A better option is 11 fxg7 ♖xc7 12 ♖xc3 ♖b8, when Black has activity but his d7-knight has yet to reach its best square, which is d5.

11...♖xf6 12 ♖xc6

Greedy but maybe best at this stage. One philosophy is, "If you are going to be attacked anyway, why not grab as much material as you can on the way?" At least this way if the attack falls through, you should win the endgame!

12...♕e6 (D)

It is time to assess the position. Black has developed all of his pieces, whilst it seems that White is only playing with his queen. The most important factor though is the two open lines towards the white king, the c- and b files. If



Black keeps playing aggressive moves, as he does in the game, then White will find it hard to defend

13 ♖c1?!

This is the last straw. White needed to find 13 ♖d2, which at least covers the a5 square, where Black's queen wishes to go, and the c3 square, where Black's knight may wish to land

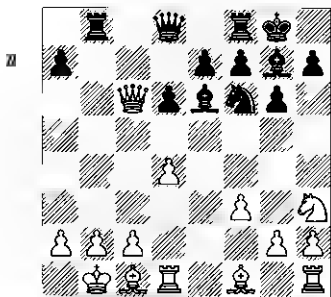
13...♜b8

Simple chess another piece lines up for the action.

14 ♖h3 (D)

14 ♖e2 ♜a5 15 b3 ♜fc8 +.

14 ♖d2 could be White's last chance, but he is still living on the edge: for example, 14. ♖d5 15 ♖e2 ♜b6 16 ♜a4 ♜b8 17 b3 ♜c8



White's position is already difficult and Black has a lot of tempting possibilities. One option for Black is much more forcing than the rest and guarantees a good attack. What is that move?

Remember to look out for all checks and captures.

14...♜xa2+!

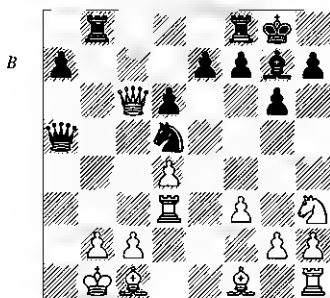
As explained before, when you have the initiative you have to play as actively as possible, otherwise the fire might burn out. This is a great example of Black doing just that. He uses his active pieces to open up the white king, which is lacking any defenders.

15 ♜xa2 ♜a5+ 16 ♜b1 ♖d5!

This move is an important part of Black's attack. Black really needed to have noticed this move when starting the combination with 14 ♜xa2+. From now on Black's pieces flood into White's position.

17 ♜d3 (D)

The only move, the threat was 17. ♖c3+ and Black wins. 17 ♖d2? allows a typical finish: 17...♜xb2+! 18 ♜xb2 ♜b8+ 19 ♖c1 ♜a1#.



17...♜fc8

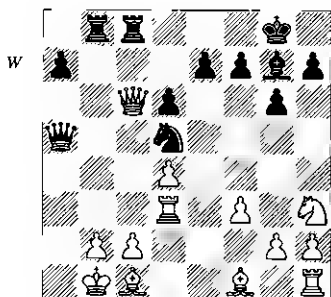
Black had a couple of other tempting options. When you have the choice between several moves, each one should be calculated in turn and given an assessment. Calculation is not always easy but it has to be done!

a) 17 ♜xd4!? 18 ♖e2 (18 ♜b3 ♖b4 19 ♜xb4 ♜xb4 20 ♜c4 ♜xb2 21 ♜xb4 ♜xb4 +) 18...♖b4 (18...♜fc8? 19 ♜xc8+! ♜xc8 20 ♜xd4 ♜b8 21 ♜xd5! ♜xd5 and White has successfully returned some of the sacrificed material to reach a safe and good position) 19 ♜c4 d5 20 ♜b3 ♖xd3 (20 ♜xb2!? 21 ♜xb2 ♖xd3 22 ♜xd3 ♜xb2+! 23 ♜xb2 ♜b8+ 24 ♖c1 ♜a1+ 25 ♖d2 ♜xb1 was a very tempting line) 21

♖xd3 ♖b4 (21.. ♖xb2!? 21 ♖xb2 transposes to the previous bracket) 22 b3 ♜fc8 ♠. Black is doing well but White is still holding on.

b) I like 17 .. ♖b4! as the variations are a bit easier to calculate due to many of White's moves being forced – and easier is better! 18 ♖c4 (18 ♜a3? ♖xa3 19 bxa3 ♖xc6+ +) 18... ♜fc8 19 ♜a3 (19 ♖b3 ♖xc2 20 ♖xc2 {20 ♖a2 ♖e1! +} 20... ♜xc2 21 ♖xc2 ♖a4+ ♠) 19. ♖f5 (a difficult move to see, as Black moves his queen sideways and not forwards) 20 g4 ♖xc2 21 ♜d3 ♖a3+ 22 ♖a2 ♖d7 23 ♜xa3 ♜xc4 24 ♖xc4 ♖c6 +.

We now return to 17 .. ♜fc8 (D)



18 ♖d2

Trying to push Black's forces backwards – not likely!

White's other options were also bad; for example, 18 ♜a3 ♜xb2+ (18... ♖xa3 also looks strong, as the defensive counter-attack by 19 ♖xc8+ seems inadequate. 19 ♜xc8 20 bxa3 ♜b8+ → {the white king is caught in the crossfire} 21 ♖b2 ♖xd4) 19 ♖xb2 (19 ♖xb2 ♖e1+ →) 19. ♜b8+! 20 ♖a2 (20 ♜b3 ♖xd4+ 21 c3 ♖xc3+ 22 ♖c2 ♖a2+ 23 ♖d3 ♖xb3 +) 20. .. ♖b4+ 21 ♖a1 ♖xd4+ 22 c3 ♖c2+ 23 ♖a2 ♖xc3 24 ♖xa3 ♖xc3 →.

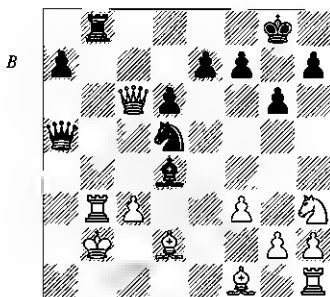
What thematic move now continues the attack for Black?

18... ♜xb2+!

Initiative! Open that king up! 18 ♖b4?! is less convincing; for example, 19 ♜a3 ♖xa3? 20 ♖xc8+ ♠.

19 ♖xb2 ♜b8+ 20 ♜b3 ♖xd4+

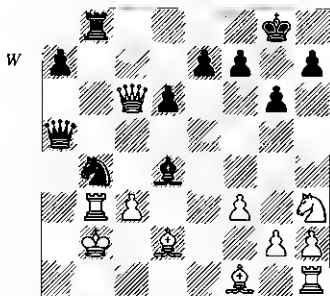
Black's last piece enters the fray
21 c3 (D)



Black only has one move here, everything else loses. What is that move?

21... ♖b4!! (D)

A beautiful move! After 21... ♜xb3+? 22 ♖xb3 +– Black runs out of pieces, and has no way to continue the attack



22 ♖a6?

This is tantamount to resignation. White had to try 22 cxd4; for example, 22 .. ♖a2+ 23 ♖c1 (23 ♖c3 ♖c2#) 23 .. ♖xc6 24 ♖xb8+ ♖xb8 ♠. White's remaining pieces are uncoordinated, which leaves him with an uphill task

22... ♖xa6

The rest is easy

23 ♖xa6 ♜xb3+ 24 ♖xb3 ♖xa6 25 cxd4 ♖e2 +–

White's kingside pawns are going to fall.

26 ♖e1 ♜xg2 27 ♜f2 ♜xf3+

Resigning would have been a good move around here.

28 ♜c4 a5 29 ♜g1 a4 30 ♜d3 a3 31 ♜d2 e5
32 dxe5 ♜c6+ 0-1

33 ♜b6+ is to follow.

Game 7

Veselin Topalov – Viswanathan Anand

Sofia 2005

Queen's Indian Defence, 4 g3 ♖a6

This game demonstrates how top players approach modern chess

Playing dynamic, double-edged chess seems to be a priority for top players. Right from the opening the world's elite like to make problems for their opponents. This is especially true where Topalov is concerned. Opening choices are very important. In these players' hands, even the most placid-looking opening can contain a lot of venom.

It is worth noting how Topalov works his pieces around the light squares g6, f7 and e6. White just keeps on dropping pieces on these squares!

1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♜f3 b6 4 g3

This move seeks to contest the long diagonal

4...♖a6 5 b3

One very interesting pawn sacrifice of late is 5 ♜c2! c5 6 d5 ♖b7 7 ♜g2

5...♖b4+ 6 ♜d2 ♜e7

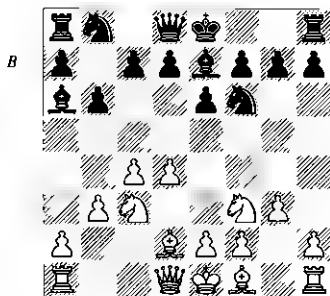
The idea of Black's last manoeuvre is to force White's bishop to d2, where it is slightly misplaced, as it cannot move directly to b2, and it can become a target for the move ...♜e4.

7 ♜c3 (D)

Most top players actually play 7 ♜c3 here but it is really just a matter of taste. 7 ♜c3 is very logical, with the simple idea of 8 e4

7...c6

Black has tried other ideas, notably 7...0 0, intending 8...d5. White can meet this with 8 ♜c1, intending to capture by 9 cxd5, when the rook will be well-placed on c1. Instead, 8 e4 is like the main game except Black has improved his position by castling instead of playing ...c6. The pawn can be weak on c6 and Black is going to castle anyway. So effectively Black has saved a tempo in that case.



8 e4

White takes over the centre with his pawns. The strong centre can be used as a basis for an attack, as it provides cover for White's pieces. The pawns can also be used to break down the opponent's defences.

8...d5

Black must contest the centre; otherwise he will get overrun after 9 e5.

9 ♜c2

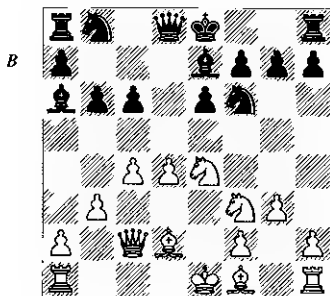
9 e5 now allows Black to move his knight to the centre with 9...♜e4.

9...dxe4 10 ♜xe4 (D)

10...♖b7

This is a fairly standard idea. Black's bishop is placed better on b7 as Black's plan is to play ...c5 at some stage. With his next move White shows his aggressive intentions.

10...c5 immediately is probably a better try, for example, Van Wely-Carlsen, Match (3), Schagen 2006 continued 11 ♜c3 ♖b7 12 ♜d3 cxd4 13 ♜xd4 ♜a6, when Black had successfully developed his pieces and was ready to castle, securing equality.



11 ♖eg5!

This move is aimed at Black's pawn base on f7/e6. With the other knight coming to e5, White's pieces are very aggressively placed. An attack can be successful for a number of reasons. In this case the attack works due to White's mobile centre, active pieces and Black's lack of development

11...c5 (D)

Or.

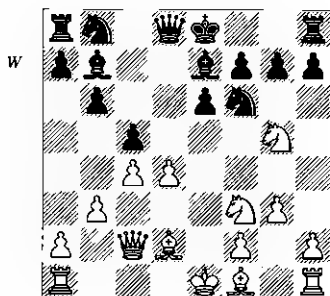
a) 11 h6 is the critical test of White's idea, but this move does weaken the light squares around Black's king to a greater extent. However, Black is really asking for 12 ♖xf7!, a standard kind of sacrifice, which works because Black's e6- and g6-squares are so weak. After 12. ♖xf7 13 ♖e5+ ♖g8 14 ♗h3 White has good compensation for the sacrificed piece, as Black is very passive and will struggle to get his pieces out. For example, 14.. ♗c8 (14.. ♗xd4 15 ♗xe6+ ♖f8 16 ♖g6+ ♖e8 17 0-0), when White can choose between 15 ♗g6 and 15 ♗c3!? – the pressure is more long-term than anything immediate.

b) 11 0-0 is very risky, considering the positioning of White's queen and the knight on g5. White will always meet .. h6 with h4!; for example, 12 0-0-0 h6 13 h4! with good attacking chances

12 d5!

Creating more chaos and really trying to open things up in the centre.

White's plan is to castle queenside, so opening the d-file will be useful for him. White's rook will cause unpleasant pressure on the d-file



Black must also lose time by capturing the pawn. Black would rather use this time to develop or improve his king safety.

12...exd5 13 cxd5 h6

Alternatively

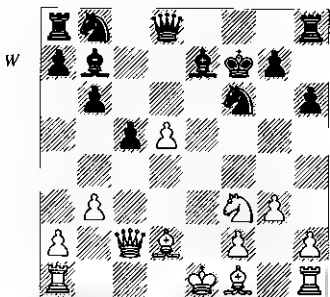
a) 13.. 0-0 could still get Black into hot water; for example, 14 0-0-0 h6 15 h4!

b) 13 . ♗xd5 14 0-0-0 h6 15 ♗c3! hxg5 16 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 17 ♗c4 ± and it is possible to see how useful the move 12 d5! has become, as the pin along the d-file causes Black serious problems.

14 ♖xf7

This is the energetic and thematic follow-up to 11 ♖eg5.

14...♗xf7 (D)



So what next?

15 0-0-0!

Quiet moves like this are hard to play after sacrificing a piece. Normally when a player has

sacrificed material he will look for forcing continuations, like a capture or check.

And this is the correct thing to start to look at. But checks and captures do not lead anywhere here, so other options must be considered. 15 0 0 0 is a sensible move that adds more pressure to Black's position. Sometimes even in the middle of complications, patience and restraint are required.

15...♙d6

Trying to block up the d file and keep the knight from reaching e5. 15 . ♙xd5 is bad as it opens up two lines (the d-file and the a2 g8 diagonal). 16 ♖e5+ (16 ♙c3 is also possible) 16 . ♙g8 17 ♙c3 ♗e8 18 ♙xd5 ♖xd5 19 ♙c4 +

e5 is now covered so White's knight looks for a better square.

16 ♖h4

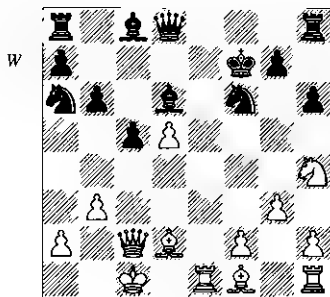
Homing in on Black's weaknesses in particular the g6-square. The threat is 17 ♗g6+ and then 18 ♖f5 followed by 19 ♙h3

16...♙c8

Trying to cover some of the light squares which are exposing the black king.

17 ♙e1 ♖a6 (D)

17. ♙e8, trying to swap off one of White's active pieces, is another idea, but White still has good play after 18 ♗g6+ ♙g8 19 ♙d3, when Black is struggling to find a move.



As I stated at the start of the game, the light squares are the key entry-points into Black's position. It is time for White to take action; what should he play here?

18 ♙e6!

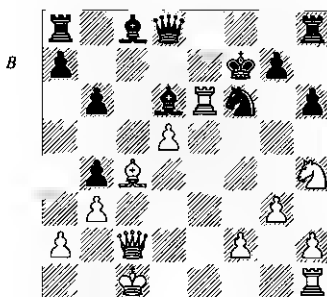
Again using the weakened light squares, another white piece takes up a very active role.

18...♖b4

Or.

a) 18...♙xe6 19 dxe6+ ♙g8 20 ♙xa6 ±.

b) 18...♖c7 19 ♙c4 b5 20 ♙c3! bxc4? (20. ♙xe6? 21 dxe6+ ♙xe6 22 ♗g6+ ♙f8 23 ♙xe6 +-, 20... ♖fe8!, a tricky move to find, is Black's best bet but things still look uncomfortable) 21 ♗g6+ ♙g8 22 ♙xf6 +-.
19 ♙xb4 cxb4 20 ♙c4! (D)



White is not worried about Black capturing his rook on e6. This is because Black still has bad pieces, for example, his rook is still stuck out of the game on h8. The opposite-coloured bishops are another advantage for White. Generally, when attacking it is good to have opposite-coloured bishops.

20...b5

20...♙xe6 21 dxe6+ ♙f8 22 ♖g6+ ♙e8 23 ♙b5+ +-.
21 ♙xb5 ♙e7?

21 ♙xb5 ♙e7?

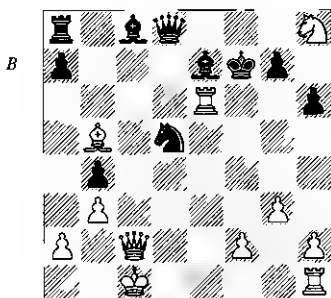
Or.

a) 21 ♙xe6? 22 dxe6+ ♙g8 23 e7! (another line-opening move, this time to let White's b5-bishop into the game) 23 ♙xe7 24 ♙c4+ ♖d5 25 ♙d1 +-.
b) 21 ♙g8 is best, trying to find some cover for the black king, though 22 ♙d1 leaves Black under a good deal of pressure.

22 ♖g6 ♖d5

22 ♙xe6 loses to 23 dxe6+ ♙g8 24 ♙d1 +-.
23 ♙xe7+

23 ♖xh8+! (D) leads to a win and is a simpler choice



Remember 'simple is good'. Do not complicate matters if there is no need to do so. Then, for example:

- a) 23. ♖g8 24 ♜e5! ♖xh8 25 ♜c6 + .
- b) 23.. ♖xh8 24 ♖g6+ ♖g8 (24. ♖f8 25 ♜e8#) 25 ♜xe7 ♖xe7 26 ♜c4+ ♖f8 27 ♖f7#
- c) 23. ♖xe6 24 ♜e1+ ♖d6 25 ♖c6#.

23... ♖xe7 24 ♜c4+ ♖f6

Black could have tried blocking with his bishop but this would not have helped either, for example, 24.. ♜e6 25 ♖xh8+ ♖xh8 26 ♜e1 ♜xc4 27 ♖xc4+ ♖f8 (27. ♖e8 28 ♖c6+ ♖f7 29 ♖e6+ +) 28 ♖f4+ ♖e8 29 ♖c7 ♖f8 30 ♖c6+ ♖f7 31 ♖e6+ ♖e8 32 ♖g6+ + - ♖d7 33 ♜d1+ ♖c8 34 ♖e6+.

25 ♖xh8 ♖d4!

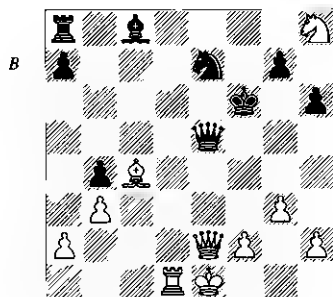
Black's best chance, centralizing the queen in the hope of a counter-attack. White is clearly winning after the other options; for example

- a) 25. ♖xh8 26 ♜d1 + ♖f5 27 ♖e4 ♜b8 28 ♖c6+ ♖g5 (28. ♖e7 29 ♖c7+ ♖f6 30 ♖f7+ ♖e5 31 ♖f4+ ♖e4 32 ♖d5+ ♖e3 33 ♖e5+

♖f3 34 ♖e2#) 29 ♖f4+ ♖g4 30 ♖g6+ ♖h3 31 ♖h5+ ♖h4 32 ♜d2 ♜g4 33 ♖xh4#.

b) 25.. ♖f5 26 ♜d1.

26 ♜d1 ♖a1+ 27 ♖d2 ♖d4+ 28 ♖e1 ♖e5+ 29 ♖e2 (D)



The ending is good as White's knight can escape

29... ♖xe2+ 30 ♖xe2

It is not possible to trap White's knight as 31 ♜d6+ followed by 32 ♖f7(+) is good for White

30.. ♖f5

30. ♜e6 31 ♜d6 + -

31 ♖f7 a5 32 ♖g4

White is a pawn up and his pieces dominate Black's. White just needs to activate his rook and it's game over

32.. ♖h4 33 h3 ♜a7 34 ♜d6+ ♖e7 35 ♜b6! ♜e7 36 ♜e5 ♖g2 37 ♖g6+!

Black's knight is now trapped

37... ♜d8 38 ♖f1 ♜b7 39 ♜xb7 40 ♖xg2 + - ♜d7 41 ♖f8 ♜d2 42 ♖e6+ ♖e7 43 ♖xg7 ♜xa2 44 ♖f5+ ♖f6 45 ♖xh6 ♜c2 46 ♜f7 ♜c3 47 ♖f4 a4 48 ♖xa4 b3 49 ♖g5+ ♖g7 50 ♖f5 b2 51 ♖f6+ ♖h7 52 ♖f5 1-0

Game 8

Jonny Hector – Peter Heine Nielsen

Sigeman & Co., Malmö 2002

Sicilian Defence, Kan Variation

It is interesting to see how Hector plays the opening here. Black threatens Hector's knights

on a couple of occasions, for example with the move 12 ..e5?, but Hector plays on as if he has

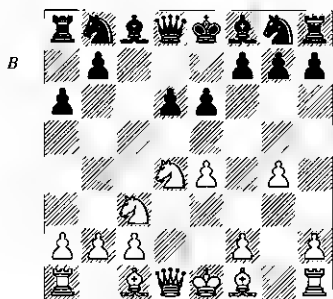
not seen the move. One move after another, Black attacks the white knights with his pawns and White just plays something else!

It seems to me that White had one plan in this game – open up the position of the black king and deliver checkmate! So why bother worrying about anything else?

There is something very appealing about this attitude of pure aggression. It reminds me of games from the old days when players did not really bother with positional ideas. Morphy, for example, just used to play the King's Gambit or something similar, with one plan in mind: checkmate! Sacrifices had to be accepted and there was no hanging around.

Things have changed a lot since then but it is good to see the odd game where a player just 'goes for it'.

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 a6 5 ♖c3 d6 6 g4 (D)



This aggressive move has become popular in many positions similar to this. The idea is to meet ♖f6 with g5, when Black will have to move his knight again. The pawn on g5 is also useful for starting an attack on the black king. If Black castles kingside, White already has a pawn storm ready. The option of playing g6 is also available to White. This is especially true if Black plays ..h6, when g6 will force Black to move his f-pawn, weakening the e6-square.

6...b5

A logical way to counter White's action on the kingside. Black gains space on the other side of the board. 6.. ♖f6? is just asking for 7 g5.

7 ♖g2

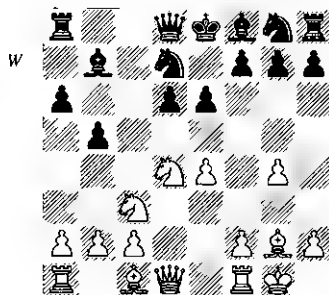
With the idea of e5, hitting the rook on a8.

7...♗b7 8 0-0

White does not have to commit his king so quickly; for example, 8 ♖e3 (the dark-squared bishop nearly always goes to this square in this type of Sicilian set-up) 8...♖d7 (8. b4 9 ♖ce2 ♖f6 10 ♖g3 d5 11 e5 ♖e4 12 f3 ♖c5 13 f4 ± Luther Stangl, Graz 2002) 9 f4 b4 10 ♖a4 with an unclear game (10 ♖ce2 ♖h4+ is a bit annoying for White)

8...♖d7 (D)

8. b4 is also possible but White's knight finds a good square on g3, where it can aid the kingside attack: 9 ♖ce2 ♖f6 10 ♖g3 h6 11 a3 (a typical idea. White aims to create weaknesses on both sides of the board) 11...e5 12 ♖df5 bxa3 13 ♖xa3 g6 14 ♖e3 ± Hort-Ree, Amsterdam 1994.



9 a4!?

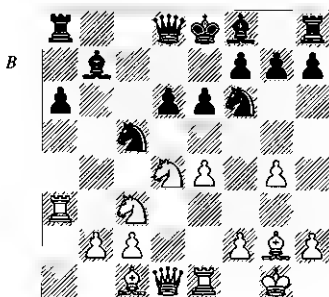
At the time of this game this move was a novelty. Another option which also looks good is 9 g5!?, which makes it hard for Black to develop his kingside pieces, whilst White can launch a pawn-storm on the kingside. 9...♖e7 10 f4 (the typical way to try to hack away at Black's position; White aims to play f5 and sometimes e5) 10 ..e5 (Black has to try to strike out; otherwise his king will be overrun) 11 ♖f5 ♖xf5 12 exf5 ♖b6+ 13 ♖f2 ♖xg2 14 ♖xg2 ♖b7+ 15 ♖d5 ± Ponomarev-Milov, Torshavn 2000. White intends to swap the queens off, reaching a superior ending. The d5 square is a great outpost for White's pieces.

9...bxa4?

Illogical as Black now has some serious weaknesses on the queenside. A more thematic response is 9...b4 10 ♖a2 (10 ♖ce2 may be superior as the knight is clearly better placed on g3 compared to a2, again it is always worth thinking where the best squares for your pieces are) 10 ♖gf6 (Black is not worried about his b pawn as he can counter in the centre) 11 ♖xb4 ♙xe4 12 ♙xe4 ♖xe4 13 ♙e1 d5 14 ♖xd5 exd5 15 f3 ♙c5 with unclear play

10 ♙xa4

White now has the initiative on both sides of the board so Black has to be careful

10...♖c5 11 ♙a3 ♖f6 12 ♙e1 (D)

The rook is well-placed here, indirectly aiming at the black king. As we shall see later on in the game, the move e5 is also something that Black has to worry about

12...e5?!

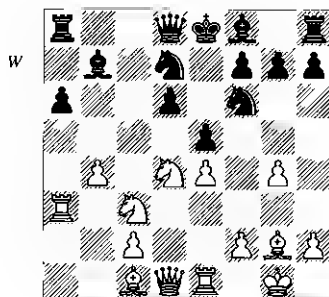
This leaves White with a big outpost on d5 and a temporary post on f5. So strategically it is not a pleasant move to play. 12...h6?!, stopping 13 g5, looks like an improvement. Then White can play on the queenside with 13 b4 but Black achieves counterplay with 13...♖cd7 14 e5?! dxe5 15 ♙xb7 exd4 16 ♙xa8 ♙xb4

13 b4

This aggressive move is typical of Hector's style, but 13 ♖f5! looks even better. 13... g6 14 ♖h6?! (trying to keep Black's king stuck in the centre) 14...♖e6 15 ♙e3 ± and it is hard to find a plan for Black

13...♖cd7? (D)

Black's pieces are moving the wrong way! This gives away the initiative without a fight – a bad policy. If a player chooses the Sicilian he must be ready to play as actively as possible. 13...exd4!, aiming for counterplay in the centre, is risky but seems like a better plan; for example, 14 bxc5 dxc3 15 e5 (15 ♙b3! may be best, activating another piece: 15... ♙b8 16 e5 with an attack) 15 dxe5 16 ♙xb7 ♙xd1 17 ♙xd1 ♙d8 18 ♙xd8+ ♖xd8 19 g5 ♖d7 with equality.

**14 g5!?**

Continuing to ignore the threat to the knight on d4. In most positions White is relying on the pawn push e5. Obviously this is only possible when Black has captured on d4 so White is waiting for Black to play this move.

14 ♖f5 is a safer option, when 14... d5 is the only break that White has to worry about, but it is bad here: 15 exd5 ♙xb4 (15... g6 16 ♖d4 ♙xb4 17 ♖c6 ♙xc6 18 dxc6 ±) 16 ♖xg7+ ♖f8 17 ♙h6 ♖g8 18 ♙b3 +.

14...exd4 15 e5?!

15 ♙xd4 is possible but Hector sticks to his guns and keeps on plodding forwards. A brave decision – it is almost possible to feel the energy coming from White's moves!

15...dxe5

Forced as 15... ♙xg2? loses to 16 exd6+ (just look at that e-file!) 16... ♖e5 17 ♙xe5+ ♖d7 18 gxf6 gxf6 19 ♙g4+ ♖xd6 20 ♙c5 +.

16 ♙xb7

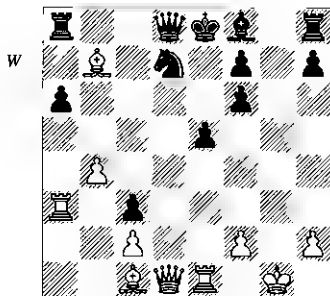
Watch this piece – it is one of the main problems that Black faces

16...dxc3

Other options leave White with at least an edge, for example.

a) 16... ♖xb4?! 17 ♜xd4 ♜e7 (17. ♖xa3? is suicidal, as after 18 ♖xa3 Black's king is trapped) 18 ♜c4 ♖xa3 19 gxf6 ±

b) 16... ♖b8 17 ♖c6 ♜c7 18 ♖xa6 dxc3 19 gxf6 gxf6 20 ♜f3 ±
17 gxf6 gxf6 (D)



White can obviously capture on a8, yet his bishop is a very nice piece. Is there any other way that White can bring in the big guns?

18 ♜d5!

A lovely centralized square for the queen.

The light-squared bishop is also stronger than Black's rook on a8 (18 ♖xa8?! ♜xa8 =) This is because the bishop always has the option of pinning Black's d7-knight, which would tie Black down. The d1-square is also made available to White's e1 rook.

18...♖a7

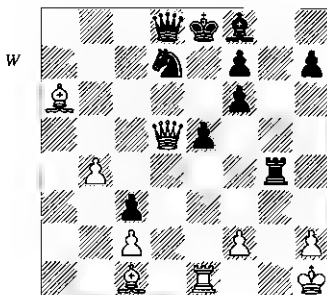
The congestion of black pieces in the middle is Black's real problem. 18... ♖b8? just seems to lose: 19 ♜d1! ♖g8+ 20 ♜h1 ♜c7 21 ♖c6 ♜d8 22 ♜xc3 +-
19 ♖xa6

There was another option in 19 ♖e3?! ♖xb4 20 ♖b3 ♜xb7 21 ♜xb7 a5 22 ♖xb4! ♖xb4 23 ♖a1 ♖g8+ 24 ♜h1 b3 25 cxb3 ♖b8 ±.

19...♖a6 20 ♖xa6 ♖g8+

20 ... ♖xb4? 21 ♖c4! ♖f8 22 ♖h6 +-
21 ♜h1 ♖g4 (D)

Black is trying to move his rook to d4 to kick the white queen away. You always have to keep

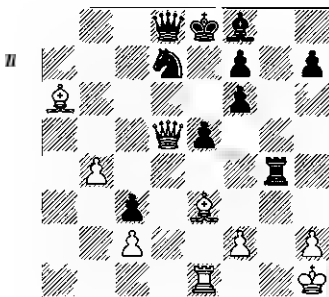


an eye open for your opponent's ideas. What would you play in White's shoes?

22 ♖e3 (D)

This is not a bad move as it develops the bishop and also puts a stop to 22... ♜d4, but even better was 22 f4!, cutting the black rook off from the queenside. Then all of a sudden White's b-pawn becomes a real menace, for example.

a) 22 ... ♖xb4 23 ♖b5 (a deadly pin) 23... ♜e7 24 ♜d1 +-
b) 22 ♜c7 23 ♜d1 ♖b6 (otherwise 24 ♖b5 is coming) 24 ♖b5+ ♜e7 25 ♜c5+! ♜xc5 26 bxc5 ♖a8 27 c6 +- and with threats like 28 ♖a3+ and 28 ♜d7+, Black can resign.

**22...♖xb4**

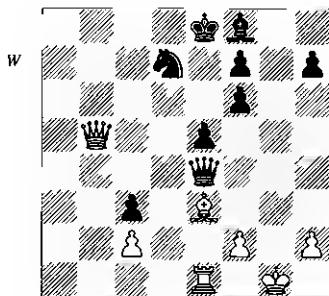
22... ♜c7 reaches a bad version of the game for Black after 23 ♖b5 ♖xb4 24 ♜d1 ♖b5 - the difference between White playing 22 ♖e3 and 22 f4 is that Black's rook can take part in

queenside operations. However, White is still better after 25 ♖xb5 ♜, as Black has lost a tempo on the main game.

23 ♗b5 ♜xb5!

At last Black nds himself of the pesky bishop!

24 ♖xb5 ♖a8+ 25 ♔g1 ♗e4 (D)



All of a sudden things are not so clear. Black's queen has entered the game and threatens multiple checks on the white king.

26 h3

Giving the king some air to breathe 26 ♖a1 was another option, when White is better.

26... ♗g6+?

This final mistake forces White's king to a safer square. Black's only chance was to be brave and play 26... ♗xc2, when the game is still on. After 27 ♖c1 (27 ♖c6 may be better, with the idea of 28 ♖a1) 27... ♗g6+ (the big difference now is that Black has this check which saves him a tempo) 28 ♔h2 f5 29 ♖xc3 ♗d6 Black has created good counterplay.

27 ♔h2 ♗d6

27... ♗xc2 is too late now, as there is no check on g6 any more: 28 ♖c6 ♗b4 29 ♖a1! and White wins

28 ♖d1 +- ♔e7 29 ♖d5 1-0

Game 9

Simon Williams – Normunds Miezis

Norwegian open Ch, Oslo 2004

Budapest Defence

The opening was quite curious in this game. Black choose the Budapest Defence, a gambit that aims for quick development and attacking chances if White hangs on to the pawn.

I had other ideas though and decided to return the pawn immediately. This was an interesting psychological ploy as Black was forced to defend rather than attack – a situation that Black might not have been happy with before the game. I enjoyed this game a lot as most of my moves go forwards – a rare thing in modern chess. The attack may not have been sound but the energy behind it carried it through.

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e5

In the Budapest Defence, Black aims to get active play in return for the pawn, although very often White simply returns it, as is the case here

3 dxe5 ♗g4 4 e4!?

4 ♗f4 is the normal move if White is trying to hold on to his extra pawn, yet the move chosen in the game clears up matters quickly.

I enjoy playing simple plans where the goal of both sides is clear. After 4 e4 White gains space and time by kicking Black's knight around; he can use this time to launch an attack. Black on the other hand hopes that White's pawn moves have weakened his position.

4... ♗xe5 5 f4 ♗g6 6 ♗f3 ♗b4+

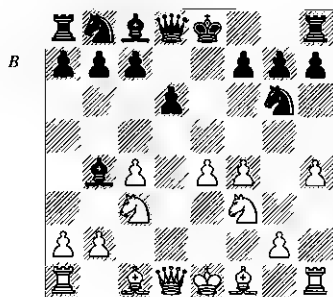
6. ♗c5?! is a mistake as Black can find himself in trouble after 7 f5 ♗h4 8 ♗g5!, when 9 ♗h5 is a nasty threat.

7 ♗c3 d6 8 h4! (D)

It is doubtful whether this is entirely correct but it does put Black on the back foot and it forces him to play accurate moves from an early stage. Most players are happy to roll off their first dozen or so moves from theory, yet when players are forced to think for themselves they are already placed under pressure

8... ♗f6

8... ♗e7 9 ♗d3 ♗g4 10 h5 ♗xc3+ 11 bxc3 ♗h4 leads to a mess with chances for both sides.



9 f5 ♖e5

Because of 8 h4!?, Black's knight can no longer move to that square. White also has a useful outpost for his bishop on g5.

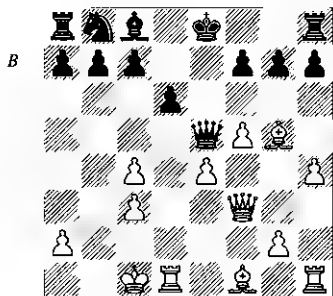
On the other hand, I have made some serious positional concessions. The e5-square is a permanent weakness, and my pawns will be ruined after ...♙xc3+ whereas Black's structure is solid.

Summing all these factors up, it became apparent to me that I had to go for a quick kill, otherwise I would be in store for some slow torture.

10 ♙g5

10 ♙d2! is more restrained and probably better. The idea is to move the c3-knight to d5; for example, 10 ...c6 11 ♙g5 ♖xf3+ 12 ♗xf3, when d6 has been weakened – a factor which can only help White.

10...♖xf3+ 11 ♗xf3 ♙xc3+ 12 bxc3 ♗e5 13 0-0-0 (D)



Speed is of the essence. If Black can play f6 and then move his knight to the e5 square, his position will be very hard to break down.

13...f6

13 ...♗a5 14 e5 is interesting; forwards, men!

14 ♙d5 ♗e7 15 ♙f4

15 e5? briefly occurred to me as the right plan, as it forces the issue in the centre. However, the sacrifice is insufficient in view of the simple 15 ...fxg5 16 e6 ♖c6 17 ♗h5+ g6 18 fxg6 ♙d8 →, when Black's king is safe in the centre, covered by his central pawns and pieces.

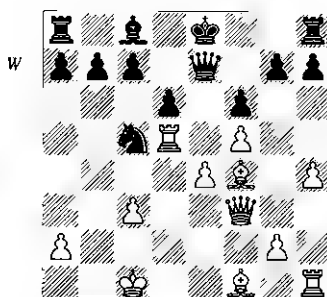
It was still a pity to move a piece back, but there is always a time to retreat. That is, if you want to avoid losing almost every game you play!

15...♖d7 16 c5!?

My lead in development must be put to use to prevent Black from safely castling and restoring order to his position. It does involve giving up material and may not be sound but it is preferable to the alternatives.

16 ♗h5+ ♗f7 17 ♗xf7+ ♙xf7 ♞ was just the kind of position that I wanted to avoid, where Black has no weaknesses whilst White has many.

16...♖xc5 (D)



White is in danger of being strategically lost. What should he play?

17 ♙xc5!?

It is hard to praise this move as being sound and good but it is certainly dangerous, unsettling and possibly forced!

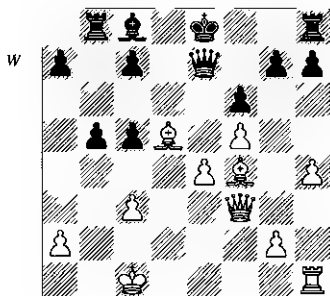
17...dxc5 18 ♙c4 b5?

Black starts freaking out. Castling should still be top of Black's agenda and after 18... ♔d7 Black should be safe enough. I had planned 19 e5 (19 ♖g3 may be best, when White still has some decent compensation) 19... 0-0 20 ♔a6. I was in one of those moods. This move is too outrageous to work. I am glad that my opponent didn't play 18... ♔d7, as I am sure that I would have been very tempted to play this way, even if it was bad. In chess, as in life, temptation should sometimes be resisted! In fact, after 20... c6 21 e6 bxa6 22 ♔c2 ♔b7 Black has everything under control.

19 ♔d5

Simple and good. White will always have good compensation now as Black's king will never find a safe home.

19... ♖b8 (D)



After White's next move Black is in serious trouble.

20 e5

Opening up the centre to allow White's rook passage towards Black's king. While this is natural, there is a stronger option. 20 ♖h5+ ♔f8 21 ♔e3! with the threat of 22 ♔xc5, so well done if you spotted this line

20... ♖b6

Trying to defend horizontally! Other lines also lead to defeat.

20... ♔xf5 21 exf6 ♖xf6 (21... gxf6 22 ♔g3! with the dual threat of 23 ♔e1 and 23 ♖xf5 is terminal for Black) 22 ♔e1+ ♔d7 (22... ♔f8 23 ♔g5 ♖g6 24 ♖e3 +-) 23 ♔g5 ♖g6 24 ♔e7+ ♔c8 and now 25 ♔xg7! is a nice way to finish the game. 25... ♖xg7 26 ♖xf5+ ♔d7 27 ♔e6 +-.

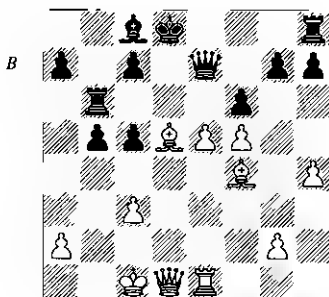
21 ♔e1

The last piece enters the attack.

21... ♔d8

21... ♔xf5 runs into 22 ♔d2 +

22 ♔d1 ♔e8 23 ♔e1 ♔d8 24 ♔d1 (D)



Agreeing a draw would have been pathetic.

24... c4

24... fxe5 25 ♔c6+ ♔d7 26 ♔g5 + .

25 exf6 ♖a3+ 26 ♔b1

This position rounds off a successful plan for White. Black's king is naked in the middle of the board with White's pieces staring longingly at it.

26... ♔xf5+ 27 ♔e4+ ♔d7 28 fxf7 ♔e8 29 ♔xh7

29 ♔f5 was even stronger

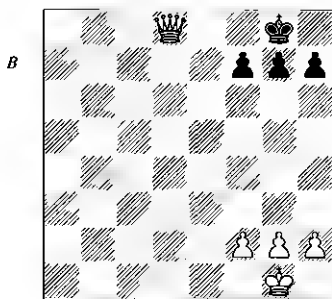
29... ♔xe1 30 g8 ♖+ ♔e8 31 ♖gd5 1-0

An extra queen normally comes in useful so Black resigned

3 Harmonizing the Army

In order to checkmate, you need to use more than one piece. It is impossible to trap your opponent's king just with one piece. For example, consider queen versus king. The queen can keep checking the king but it cannot force checkmate on its own. Another piece has to be used as well so even at the most basic level, a player needs to harmonize at least two pieces to win the game.

Another example, albeit an extreme one, is shown here:



Even in this position, White would not be able to checkmate without the help of Black's kingside pawns. In the early stages of the game, a beginner normally starts out by moving his queen around the board in the hope of capturing lots of pieces. This rarely works (except if your name is Nakamura!) and the queen is very likely to run into some sort of trouble.

To be successful in chess, you need to coordinate your pieces and use them together. When starting an attack, make sure that your pieces are on good squares. The attack will not work if they are placed badly.

When attacking, it is a good idea to try to make your opponent's life as difficult as possible. For example, if there is a choice between winning a pawn but letting your opponent gain counterplay, or keeping the pressure on, it is normally preferable to keep the pressure on. Take a look at 17 ♗c4! in Game 14, Short-Timman, for proof!

Game 10

Daniel Gormally – Emil Sutovsky

Gibraltar 2005

Sicilian Defence, Najdorf Variation

This game features a wild and brilliant attack from Sutovsky which I was fortunate enough to witness first-hand. There are very few high-level

games where one side sacrifices most of his pieces and then goes on to checkmate his opponent. So this game is rather unique in that way

and goes against the general flow of modern chess

Sutovsky manages to deliver checkmate with three minor pieces. Just watch how Sutovsky's three remaining pieces harmonize together truly magical. This game reminds me of one of Morphy's best efforts; Black just keeps on coming and risks all in the process.

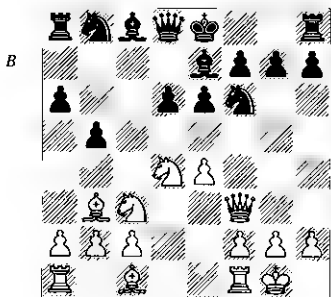
1 e4 c5 2 ♟f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♟xd4 ♟f6 5 ♟c3 a6

Since Fischer started playing the Najdorf, it has become the preferred weapon of some of the world's best players. It seems the surge has increased since the early 1990s. Black often seeks counterplay on the queenside starting with the move b5, while White focuses his attention on the kingside and centre.

6 ♟c4

The Fischer-Sozin Attack. 6 ♟e3 and 6 ♟g5 are the main lines nowadays.

6...e6 7 ♟b3 b5 8 0-0 ♟e7 9 ♟f3 (D)



White brings his queen over to the kingside in the hope of putting pressure on Black's king.

9...♟c7 10 ♟g3

One of Black's ideas was to meet 10 e5 with 10...♟b7 +

10...♟c6 11 ♟xc6 ♟xc6 12 ♟e1

After 12 ♟xg7 ♟g8 13 ♟h6 ♟xe4 White has real problems on g2.

12...♟b7

Up to this point both sides have developed their pieces to natural enough squares, although White's play is a bit uninspiring, as he has not made any real attempts to disrupt Black. White's

next couple of moves confirm his passive approach.

In modern chess the best attacking players will always strive to put as much pressure on their opponents as possible. This often means contesting the sharpest opening lines. In general it is advantageous to make your opponent start calculating from the earliest moment.

Nigel Short did famously try out this variation against Kasparov in his 1993 World Championship match, albeit without much success.

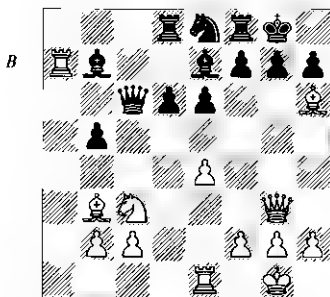
13 a3

13 ♟xg7 allows Black to stir things up with 13...♟g8, when the pressure along the a8-h1 diagonal and the g-file places White under considerable pressure. Anyway it looks like Gormally is in a peaceful mood today.

13...♟d8 14 a4

Short preferred 14 f3 against Kasparov. White plays a4 only now to try to gain from Black's rook leaving the a-file.

14...0-0 15 axb5 axb5 16 ♟h6 ♟e8 17 ♟a7 (D)



At first glance it may look like White's pieces have reached active, menacing squares. In reality they are punching without any aim. White's rook will soon be swapped off and when Black plays ♟h8 he will force White's bishop to retreat. A common mistake is shown here: White is playing moves that look aggressive but they do not actually achieve a great deal.

It is important on every move to try to consider all your opponent's best responses. I believe that there are two ways of doing this.

- Through experience Knowledge from prior experience will help you become more aware of certain things to watch out for, such as a particular arrangement of pieces. It is important not to get 'carried away' though (a mistake I often make!). It helps me to stand back from the scenario, so that I can look at the position in an unbiased way. Sometimes I even go and stand behind my opponent to look at the board from his point of view. A phrase that springs to mind is "Everyone must look at a situation from a near and one must step back and look at it from afar." (*The Book of Five Rings*).
- By properly calculating your opponent's defensive options you can decide more easily on the best move and the best way to approach the position.

17... ♖a8!

At the time this was a novelty, improving on the game Morozevich-Rowson, British League (4NCL) 2001/2, which continued 17. ♖h8?, when White replied with 18 ♖e3?, whereas 18 ♖d5! would have kept Black defending in an inferior position. Moves like 18 ♖d5 are very thematic for this type of position. It is clearly the critical move – and critical moves should always be analysed first.

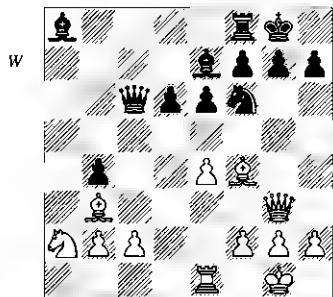
18 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 19 ♖f4 ♖f6

It is surprising how much violence erupts from a seemingly passive position. The calm before the storm!

20 ♖h6 ♖e8 21 ♖f4 b4

Nice try... but no draw today, thanks

22 ♖a2 ♖f6 (D)



Black's biggest trump in this position is his pressure along the a8-h1 diagonal. Factors like this are always worth watching out for, as you can only start targeting your opponent's weaknesses when you know where they are!

23 ♖h6 ♖h5

From this moment onwards Black's pieces start attacking at an alarming speed.

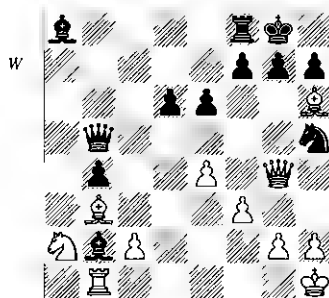
24 ♖g4 ♖b5 f3?!

While this move blunts the a8-h1 diagonal, it also creates extra weaknesses around the white king. The a7-g1 diagonal is opened, White's queen is stuck on one side of the board and the pawn-structure around the white king has become looser. 25 ♖c1 looks more natural, as White brings his knight back towards the centre.

25... ♖f6 26 ♖b1

A painful move to make. A rook's purpose in life is to move along open files, and not to be stuck defending a pawn.

26... ♖d4+ 27 ♖h1 ♖xb2! (D)



28 ♖d2

28... ♖xb2?? allows 28... ♖f1#.

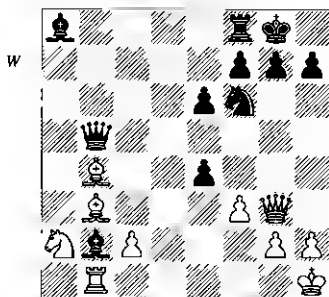
28... ♖f6 29 ♖g3

It was probably a good idea for White to try to swap queens by 29 ♖g5. In general, it makes sense to swap pieces when you are under pressure, as your opponent then has fewer pieces to attack you with.

29... d5!?

Very imaginative. Black wants to open lines towards the white king. This pawn has a very bright future.

30 ♖xb4 dxe4?! (D)



Your computer will not suggest this move, as it isn't in fact sound. Nevertheless, the human imagination produces many ideas that will remain unfathomable to computers for a long time, and in my opinion there will always be scope for the creative input that only human players can add to the game. Even if this input is not 'correct' in the technical sense, I would always prefer to see entertaining chess

31 c4?

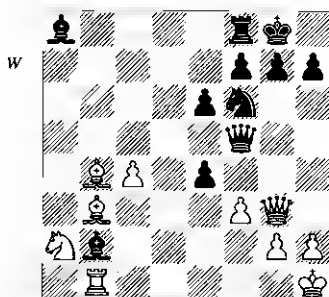
In a complicated position, White goes wrong. It may be possible that Black's plan can be refuted by the calm 31. xf8 ? – if you have a bad position anyway, why not capture as much material as possible? This is a theme that I notice comes up quite frequently in this book, which just shows the defender has to play bravely as well. 31. h5 32. d6 exf3 33. e7 fxg2 + 34. g1 g5 and now

a) The natural 35. d8 + g7 36. xf8 +? (36. c3 !) is a mistake, as the queen is needed nearer to the centre so as to keep within range of the whole board. 36... g6 37. xa8 f4 brings about an amazing position, where Black is completely winning due to the pawn on g2. 38. g8 + g7 – +.

b) 35. c3 ! is a very hard move to spot when visualizing this position in advance. It is very important to block out Black's dark-squared bishop. The position is still a mess but White's extra material should prevail

31... f5 ! (D)

White has forced Black's queen to a better square. Black is aiming all his forces at opening up the h1-a8 diagonal.



32. xf8 ?

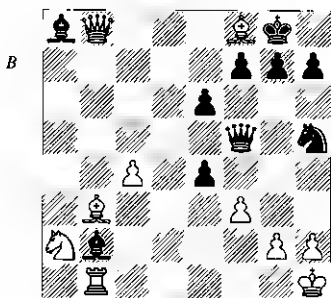
It is worth trying to keep the long diagonal closed with 32. f4 ? but Black has very good play after 32. h5 33. g5 wg5 34. fxg5 e5 35. xf8 xf8 .

32... h5

The knight has been hopping backwards and forwards for most of the game, so it is slightly ironic that this move decides the game

33. g4

33. wb8 (D) is White's most active try, but it is too little, too late



What crushing move does Black have available? Another sacrifice: 33. g3 +! Then:

a) 34. g1 d4 #.

b) 34. wg3 exf3 35. xb2 fxg2 + 36. wg2 f1 #

c) 34. hxg3 wh5 + 35. g1 d4 + 36. f1 h1 + 37. e2 wg2 + 38. e1 wf2 + 39. d1 f1 + 40. d2 e3 + 41. c2 we2 + 42. c1 wd2 #

33...exf3 34 ♖xf5 fxg2+

Pacman style, Black's pawn keeps on munching its way towards the white king

35 ♖g1 ♔d4+!

Not 35...exf5?? 36 ♜xb2 ♕f4 37 ♜xg2 + .

36 ♖f2 (D)

Knights on the rim are dim .

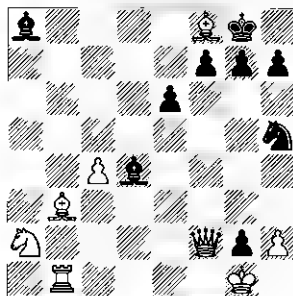
36...♕f4!

A unique and pretty position Black's plan has worked perfectly White's kingside has crumbled, while Black's remaining three pieces out-weigh White's army.

0-1

"He is a poet who creates a work of art out of something which would hardly inspire another man to send home a picture postcard" (Max

B



Euwe). There was something very poetic about this game

Game 11

Viktor Bologan – Ye Jiangchuan

Tan Chin Nam Cup, Beijing 2000

Sicilian Defence, Richter-Rauzer Attack

When players castle on opposite sides of the board, the game is usually an entertaining affair

In this game, fought between two strong grandmasters, timing was of the essence. First of all Bologan positioned his pieces on their best squares and then he played an interesting pawn sacrifice 19 e5!, which had two main uses. First of all it gained time, which is all-important when attacking, but it also restricted Black's pieces, stopping him from attacking. The way that White continued the attack is very impressive.

1 e4 c5 2 ♕f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♕xd4

A high proportion of the double-edged games between the world's top players start with the Sicilian

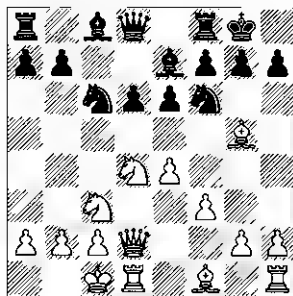
4...♕f6 5 ♕c3 ♕c6 6 ♖g5

White shows his aggressive intentions. The bishop is very active on this square but sometimes it can become a target

6...e6 7 ♖d2 ♖e7 8 0-0-0 0-0 9 f3 (D)

Both players are following established theory. White aims to create some weaknesses in Black's position by playing g4, h4, etc. Black

B



normally gets counterplay on the half-open c-file

9...a6 10 h4 ♕xd4

Black has some other options here, most notably 10...d5, 10 ♖d7 and 10...♖c7.

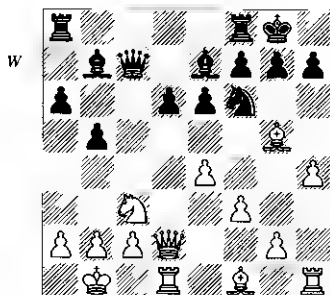
11 ♖xd4 b5 12 ♖b1

White often plays this move in the Sicilian. The king is a useful defender of a2 and at a later point ♖c1 becomes a possibility, supporting the c2-pawn

12...♖b7 13 ♖d2!?

White wishes to rearrange his pieces to their best squares before he dives into the attack. Obviously, by bringing his pieces to superior squares, White gives his attack a better chance of success.

13...♖c7 (D)



White has just moved his queen from d4 to d2; why?

14 ♖e2!

The idea of White's previous move. On c3 the knight was only a target to a possible ...b4 or even an exchange sacrifice. On d4 it takes up a central role where it has chances to put e6 under pressure. Just watch where this knight ends up.

14...♖ac8 15 ♖d4 ♖fd8 16 ♖d3

Now that White has got all of his pieces to their ideal places, he can start the onslaught

16...♖e8

Black must find a plan as well. The normal way Black gets counterplay in positions like this is through the break ...d5. Black first decides to place his dark-squared bishop on f6 before playing the break ...d5. On f6 it takes up a more aggressive role

17 g4

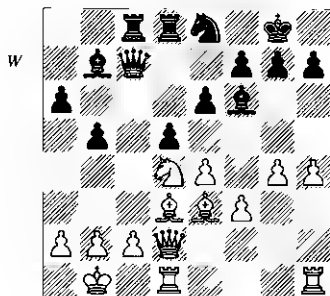
White has the advantage, as his pawns are more mobile and pieces more central.

17...♖f6 18 ♖e3 d5 (D)

Taking on d5 allows Black's pieces to enter the game. Is there another option?

19 e5!

A good positional sacrifice. White gains time and restricts Black's pieces. A pawn is a rather



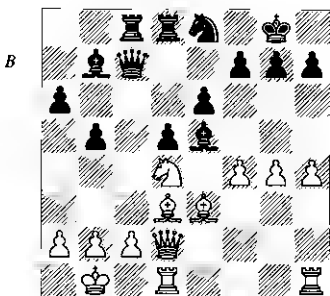
small investment when the main issue is checkmate.

If White hadn't played this move, then he would probably be worse so in some ways this move is forced. After 19 exd5?! ♖xd5 ♖, compared to the game Black's light-squared bishop and d8-rook have entered the game

19...♖xe5

Not 19...♖xe5?? 20 g5 ♖e7 21 ♖f4 ♖xd4 22 ♖xb7+ ♖xh7 23 ♖xd4 +.

20 f4 (D)



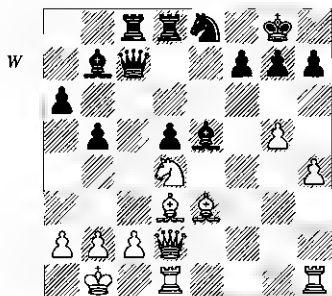
20...♖d6

After 20...♖xd4 21 ♖xd4 White's dark-squared bishop is dominant on d4, where it controls most of the board. This bishop, combined with the simple plan of pushing the kingside pawns, leaves White at least equal. It is also important to try to work out what Black's plan might be; I cannot see anything obvious.

21 g5 e5

Black wants to move his dark squared bishop back to e5 and then bring the knight from e8 to d6. That manoeuvre would improve the position of both minor pieces. Another option was to wait by 21...♙f8 22 h5 ♘d6 23 g6 ♘c4 with an unclear position.

22 fxe5 ♙xe5 (D)



White's next move is quite typical in these double-edged positions, where timing and saving tempi are the key to success.

23 g6!

White uses his pawns as dispensable battering-rams. This pawn break is well worth remembering because it has appeared in many interesting encounters. The idea is to open lines towards the black king.

23...♘d6

23...fxg6? allows 24 ♘e6 ♚, but 23...hxg6 may be possible. However, it would take a brave or stupid man to play this move. Black is staring straight down the barrel of a gun, an h- and g-file gun. Play could continue 24 h5 gxh5 (no fear!) 25 ♙xh5 ♘f6 26 ♙h3, when things look very unpleasant for Black; his kingside has too many open lines and pieces aimed at it.

24 gxh7+

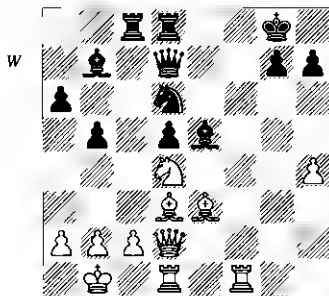
24 gxh7+ ♙h8 25 h5 was another way to continue the attack but Bologan wants to soften up the e6-square by taking its only defender away.

24...♙xf7 25 ♙hf1

I found this move hard to understand. Why not move the d1-rook to f1, leaving the other rook for g1 or the h-file? However, White has

judged that the rook is not needed on h1 and it is better to keep a rook in the middle of the board. Whether this is correct, I am not sure.

25...♙d7 (D)



This is a good position to take a look at. How should White continue attacking?

To get the answer to this we should ask ourselves a couple of questions. First off, where are Black's main weaknesses?

g7 is defended by three pieces, so it is safe for the time being, but h7 is only defended by the king. So h7 is a target. The next problem is Black's strong bishop on e5, which does a very good defensive job. Therefore..

26 ♘f3!

Attacking the bishop and relocating the knight to a much more aggressive square, g5. It is instructive to see how quickly Black's light squares fall after this. White's bishop on d3 proves to be too strong.

26...♙f6 27 ♘g5! ♘c4

Things are really heating up! This attempt at counterplay from Black is too late, White has got his attack in first. After 27...h6 28 ♙xf6! (shattering Black's kingside pawn-structure analyses) 28...gxf6 (28...hxg5 29 ♙g6 + with 30 ♙d4 to follow) 29 ♘h7 ♙e6 30 ♙d4 ± too many pieces are doing too many things.

28 ♙xh7+ ♙h8 29 ♙e2

If the white queen could reach h5 it would be game over. It becomes clear around here that the tempi White saved by sacrificing the odd pawn have helped him greatly, his attack has

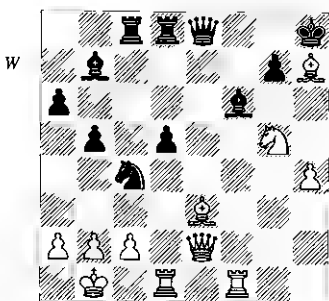
landed first. If Black were given a couple of free moves, his pieces would flood into White's position, but from now on Black is forced onto the back foot.

29...♖e8 (D)

This is the only way to stop ♖h5. Other options:

a) 29. ♖xe3 30 ♖h5! ♖xf1 31 ♖xf1 +- Black is powerless to stop 32 ♖f5+; one nice line where all White's pieces are working is 31...g6 32 ♖xg6+ ♖g8 33 ♖f7+ ♖f8 34 ♖h6+ ♖g7 35 ♖h5+ ♖e7 36 ♖f7+ ♖e8 37 ♖xg7.

b) 29...♖xg5 30 hxg5 ♖xh7 (30. ♖xe3 31 ♖g6! {31 ♖h5? ♖g4} 31. ♖g4 {31..♖g4 32 ♖h2+} 32 ♖f5 +-) 31 ♖h5+ ♖g8 32 g6 and 33 ♖h7#.



What should White play here?

30 ♖xf6!

Removing another defender from the black king Black's remaining pieces are on the wrong side of the board

30...gxf6 31 ♖d4

Nice touch, power bishop!

31...♖c6

Or

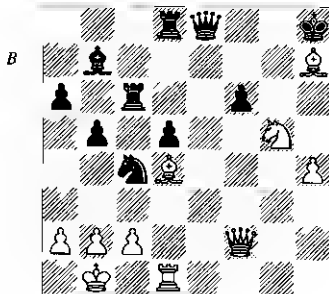
a) 31...♖xe2? 32 ♖xf6#

b) 31. ♖d6 32 ♖f2 +

c) 31. ♖e5 32 ♖f3 (32 ♖f2 is also good but the text-move is flashier) 32...♖g7 (32..♖xf3 33 ♖xf6#) 33 ♖f5 ♖c6 34 ♖g1 ♖h8 35 ♖xe5 +-

32 ♖f2 (D)

32...♖f8



Other options:

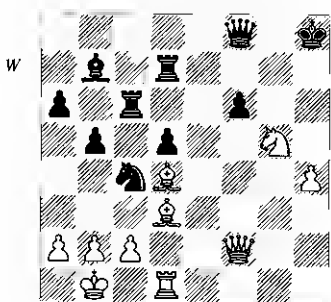
a) 32. ♖e7 33 ♖e1 ♖g7 34 ♖e2! and Black can't stop the dual threats of 35 ♖e8+ and 35 ♖h5

b) 32.. ♖dd6 33 ♖e1 ♖h5 34 b3 +- . Black is totally tied down

33 ♖d3

Another way to win is 33 ♖f3 ♖g7 34 ♖g4 ♖c8 35 ♖e6++

33...♖d7 (D)



34 ♖f5 +-

34 ♖e2 also wins.

34...♖e7

34...♖e7 35 ♖g1 ♖c8 36 ♖e6! + and 37 ♖h5+

35 ♖h7

The last line of defence to Black's king, the f6-pawn, is about to drop and with it so does the game

35...♖c8 36 ♖h5 ♖f7 37 ♖g6 1-0

Game 12

Alexander Grishchuk – Stellan Brynell

Bundesliga 2002/3

French Defence, Classical Variation

As I am sure the reader is well aware, Grishchuk is a seriously talented chess-player, who has a flair for tactics.

What makes this game unique is the way in which he sacrifices the piece: he leaves it on an open square in the middle of the board without any outward threats. There is no check or capture, which is normally the case when one makes a sacrifice.

He plays the move 15 ♖e4!! in order to bring life to his pieces – a true bit of class.

It is also worth noting the quiet moves that White plays, such as 18 ♖e3!, in order to keep the position under control. Even though he is a piece down, Grishchuk does not rush matters.

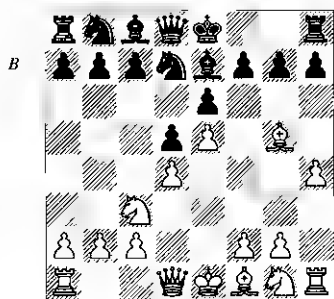
1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3

This has always been the most critical way to test the French Defence. Lots of sharp lines are possible where both players have to play very accurately

3...♗f6 4 ♖g5

4 e5 ♗fd7 5 f4 leads to more closed positions.

4...♖e7 5 e5 ♗fd7 6 h4!?! (D)



Grishchuk is at home when attacking, and this is an example of him using a variation which suits his style. White gives up a pawn so

that he can attack down the h-file. Another great player who used this line was Alekhine.

6...♗xg5 7 hxg5 ♖xg5 8 ♗d3 g6

This is a concession that Black would rather not make. This move weakens the dark squares on the kingside. As we shall see later on in the game, these dark squares are crucial.

9 ♗f3 ♖e7 10 0-0-0

White has played very logically and has a nice lead in development. The only problem is opening up Black's position.

Another natural move for White is 10 ♖e3, with the idea of moving the queen to f4 or h6 to put pressure on the weakened dark squares around the kingside. For instance, 10 ♗c6 11 0-0-0 ♗b6 12 ♗h6 ♗d7 13 ♖g5 (White has chosen a positional path, homing in on Black's weak pawn on h7) 13... ♖xg5+ 14 ♗xg5 ♖e7 15 ♗xh7 ± Hector-Brynell, Malmo 1993

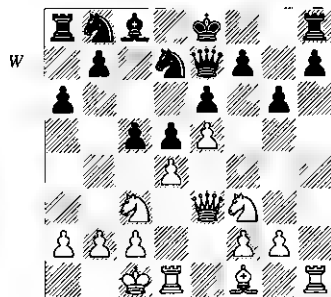
10...a6

10... c5? 11 ♗b5 gives White what he wants

11 ♖e3

Aiming at the weakened dark squares around Black's kingside

11...c5 (D)



Black decides upon opening the position in order to get counterplay on the queenside. This

is a risky decision as he is behind in development. The reasoning behind it was that otherwise White would be in control of the game without taking any risks. White could build up pressure, especially on the h file, which would probably lead to him winning the h-pawn, ensuring him a better position.

Decisions like this are very hard to make in chess and the relevant factors must be weighed up carefully.

12 dxc5 ♖xc5

Black already has to be careful; for example, 12...♙xd5? gets hit by 13 ♜xd5! exd5 14 ♙xd5 ♖f8 15 ♙c7+ ♔d8 16 ♙xa8 +-. .

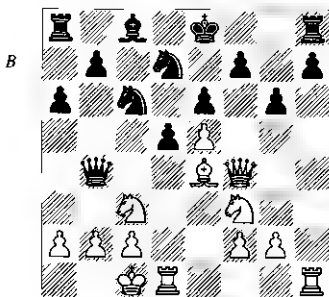
13 ♖f4

This is the best square for the queen, keeping an eye on the f7-pawn. ♙g5 is now always a move that Black has to watch out for. I already believe that Black's position is pretty horrible, and not one that I would like to play against anyone, especially one of the best attacking players in the world!

13...♙c6 14 ♔d3 ♖b4

14 ♖xf2 is a move that only the insane and computers would play. It looks much too slow but it is another pawn! Maybe Black can hang on, at any rate it looks better than the move chosen by Brynell. 14...b5 is also logical, gaining space on the queenside.

15 ♔e4!! (D)



This strange-looking move poses some serious problems for Black. White is threatening to capture on d5 with his rook, which is surprisingly difficult to stop. If Black accepts the offer

of the bishop, he opens up the d-file and allows White's c3-knight access to some juicy squares, mainly d6 and f6. So there is a lot of logic behind White's idea. The main reason the move works is because White's army is fully developed whilst Black has a long way to go to mobilize his forces.

15...dxe4

Or

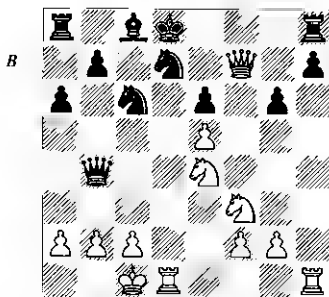
a) 15...b5 16 ♜xd5! (opening the centre is the key to White's plan even if it costs him a rook) 16...exd5 17 ♙xd5 (the mass of white pieces in the centre is impressive) 17...♖a5 18 e6! (opening up more lines) 18...fxe6 19 ♔xg6+ ♔d8 20 ♖g5+ +.

b) 15...h6 (a prophylactic move, trying to lessen the weight of 16 ♜xd5) 16 ♜xd5! (any way!) 16...exd5 (after 16...g5 17 ♙xg5 White's initiative looks too strong, as every piece is playing a part in the onslaught) 17 ♙xd5 ♖a5 and now 18 e6! destroys Black's position. It breaks apart his pawn-structure and gives White the option of dropping a knight onto c7. 18...fxe6 19 ♔xg6+ ♔d8 20 ♖h4+! +.

Thus Black is forced to capture White's bishop on e4.

16 ♙xe4 ♜f8?!

Black has a better way to defend, namely 16...♔d8. Black must try to run his king over to safety on the queenside, as it will not last long in the centre. 17 ♖xf7 (D) and now



a) With 17 ♜f8 Black seeks to swap the queens, which he figures will help his cause. This is not really the case as White's remaining

pieces are very active: 18 ♖g7 ♗e7 19 ♜xh7 ♗xg7 20 ♜xg7 ♗c7 21 ♖c5 ±.

b) 17. ♗c7 18 ♖d6 (White is now threatening 19 ♖xc8 followed by capturing the bishop on d7; 18 ♖eg5 is another tempting option; for example, 18... ♗b8 19 ♖xe6 is unclear as Black has managed to walk his king away to relative safety) 18 ♜f8 (the only move; 18 ♗b8? 19 ♖xc8 ♖dx5 20 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 21 ♗f6 +) 19 ♗xh7 ♜xf3!? (a common theme for the defender is shown here, when a player is material up but on the defensive, it is often a good idea to return some of that material to reduce the pressure and to take the initiative away from the attacker) 20 gxf3 ♗f4+ 21 ♗b1 ♖xc5 (Black's knights are hard to budge but White still holds some kind of advantage, as his pieces are working better together) 22 ♗e7 ±

17 a3

A calm move in the middle of the storm. It is important not to get carried away when attacking. White takes a slight time-out here to push Black's queen away to a more passive square.

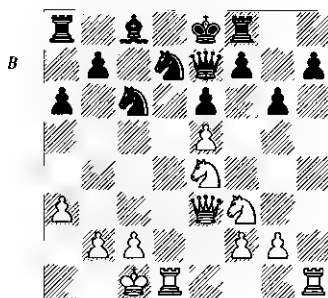
17... ♗e7

Or 17... ♗a5 18 ♗h4! (with a threat!) 18 ♜h8 (18 ♖e7 19 ♖d6+ ♖d8 20 ♖g5! {White's knights are attacking Black's king like a swarm of angry bees} 20. h5 21 ♖h7 +-) 19 ♖d6+ ♖f8 20 ♖xc8 ♜xc8 21 ♜xd7 +

18 ♗e3! (D)

Maybe one of the toughest moves for White to find. The idea is to prevent Black's king from running away to the queenside.

18... ♜h8



Other moves do not help Black; for example

a) 18 ♖d8? 19 ♗b6+ ♗e8 20 ♜xd7 ♖xd7 21 ♖d6+ +-

b) 18... f5 19 exf6 ♜xf6 (19... ♖xf6 20 ♖d6+ ♖d7 21 ♖f5+ +-) 20 ♖fg5 h5 21 g4!? with some nasty intentions. White is fully in charge here

19 ♖fg5 ♖dx5

Black can try capturing this pawn with his other knight but to no avail: 19... ♖xc5 20 ♖xh7 (21 ♖hf6+ is White's annoying threat) 20 ♜g8 21 ♖c3 ♖g4 22 f3! (Black's position is about to collapse) 22... f5 23 ♖d6+ ♖d8 24 fxc4 +-

20 ♖xh7

The end.

20... ♜xh7 21 ♜xh7 ♗f8 22 ♖f6+ 1-0

After 22 ♗e7 23 ♗g5 White's threats are too much, for example, 23 ♖c4 (what else to play? Black is running out of moves) 24 ♖d7+ wins Black's queen.

Game 13

Bartłomiej Macieja – Robert Kempinski

Polish Team Ch, Glogow 2001

Sicilian Defence, 3 f4

Right from the outset of this game, White demonstrated a lack of concern for material. He practically forced his opponent to win a pawn as early as move 12. White's priority throughout was activity and making his army work as one whole unit.

Black's position was destroyed by White's 20th move, which was a real killer. White sacrificed the only piece he had on the queenside in order to obtain a strong outpost on e5.

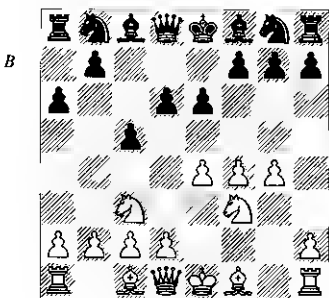
Another reason that I picked this game is for White's 5th move, which is very novel and

shows that even at an early stage there is still some room for exploration in chess.

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 d6 3 f4

This set-up was popularized by a group of English players in the 1970s and 1980s. White's set up looks harmless enough, but the advanced f-pawn will always give him a basis for an attack. It is well known that there is a lot of danger for Black in Open Sicilian positions. But closed positions such as the one chosen here by White can also pose a large threat if not dealt with properly.

3...a6 4 ♜f3 e6 5 g4? (D)



The first rather shocking move, showing White's intentions, which is quite simply to bulldoze Black on the kingside and checkmate him! White can get away with such moves as the position has a closed nature.

5...d5

A logical reply, countering a wing attack with central counterplay.

6 d3 ♜f6

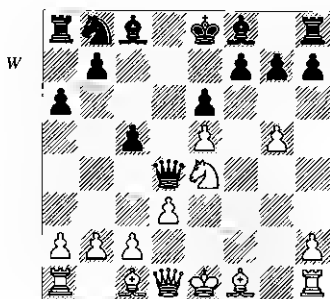
6...d4 is a move Black can wait to play. It is better for the time being for Black to keep the tension in the centre.

7 g5 dxe4 8 ♜e5

8...dxe4 leaves White with a space advantage after 8...♞xd1 + 9 ♜xd1 but his king is slightly misplaced on d1.

8...♜fd7 9 ♜xe4 ♜xe5 10 fxe5 ♞d4 (D)

Black's play so far has been very logical. He plays as actively as possible in order to try to refute White's early pawn moves. The real question is whether White's pawns on e5 and g5 are



strong or weak. They will either be picked off by Black or used by White for an attack.

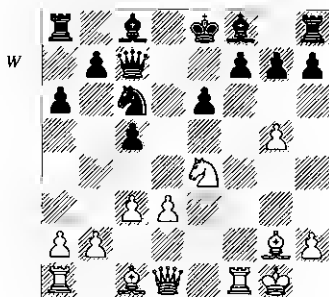
11 ♜g2 ♜c6

11...♞xe5 wins a pawn but hands the initiative over to White. After 12 0-0 White has good compensation due to his lead in development and the pressure on the f-file. So Black decides to develop instead.

12 c3

The pawn on e5 is lost anyway so White forces the black queen to capture it, hoping that the queen will also become a target on e5.

12...♞xe5 13 0-0 ♞c7 (D)



It is time to try to assess the position. Black has won a pawn but at a price. He is behind in development, and hasn't castled. His king will come under fire, especially down the f-file. White's moves are also a lot easier to play as he can develop and keep making threats, which Black must constantly defend against.

14 ♖e3

When attacking and working out the best places to put your pieces, it is also very important to bear in mind what your opponent is planning. If you can disrupt or stop his plans, then things will be made a lot harder for him.

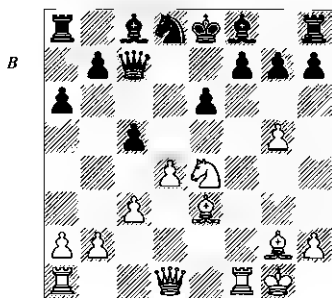
Thus 14 ♖f3 deserves attention, as it stops Black from developing his bishops; for example, 14...♗d6? 15 ♘xd6+ ♖xd6 16 ♖xf7+ ♗d8 17 ♖xg7+—

14...♗d8

14...b6 is another way that Black can try to develop his pieces. White has a couple of sensible plans against this:

a) 15 ♖h5 ♗b7 16 ♖f2 with pressure

b) 15 a3?!. White's line of thinking goes something like this: "I can see that Black wishes to develop his bishop to b7. After this I expect him to castle queenside. So if I can play b4 at some point I shall be able to start an attack against his king." After 15 ♗b7 16 b4 White is playing on both sides of the board.

15 d4 (D)

Black has yet to castle so the centre should be opened.

15...cxd4 16 cxd4

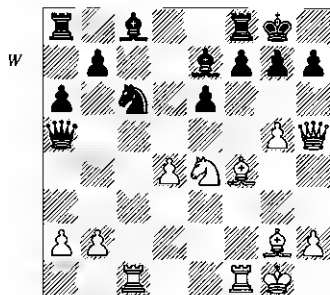
With ideas of playing 17 d5 and 17 ♖c1.

16...♗e7

Black should have also considered moving his other bishop out; for example, 16. ♗d7 17 ♖c1 (17 d5? exd5 18 ♖xd5 ♗e6 19 ♖d2 is unclear) 17...♗e6. This may be a better defence for Black as his light-squared bishop is a good piece, but he still needs to castle

17 ♖c1 ♖a5 18 ♗f4 ♗c6 19 ♖h5

Every white piece plays a role, which just goes to show that playing natural attacking moves can be very dangerous!

19...0-0 (D)

Black has castled into the danger zone. Unless there is a winning attack White should try to improve the placement of his pieces. So the question is, how can White harmonize his pieces to even better squares?

20 ♖xc6!

I really like this move. The black knight was more important than White's rook. The knight was covering the e5-square, which is the ideal position for White's dark-squared bishop. After this exchange the bishop is free to move to e5.

This reminds me of something Bronstein once said in a lecture. He believed that at the start of the game minor pieces (bishops and knights) were better than rooks. This is very true as rooks take a long time to enter the game, whilst minor pieces can fly in quickly. Just have a look at where Black's rooks are placed at the moment. They are irrelevant to the safety of his king.

20...bxc6 21 ♗e5!

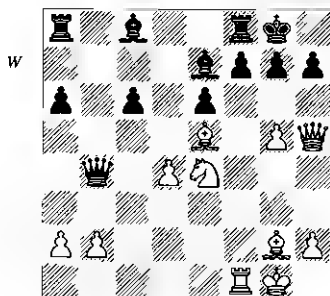
Everything loaded and ready! Time to unleash some bullets!

21...♖b4 (D)

21. ♖xa2? would not last long, for example, 22 ♗f6+! gxf6 23 gxf6+—.

22 a3

This is good, but there was an even stronger move for White here, but not an easy one to



find. In actual fact, it may be the hardest move to find in the entire book! So good luck! A good understanding of the position is required here.

a) After 22 Qf6+? Kxf6 (forced) 23 gxf6 f8 24 fxg7 Na7 , it seems that Black can defend due to chances of a counter sacrifice on d4 25 Kxc6 Kxd4? 26 Kxd4 Wxd4+ 27 Kh1 Kc7

b) 22 Kh1! is a stunning little move! White innocuously shuffles his king over to the corner of the board. In reality though this is a dual-purpose move. First of all the g1-square is vacated so that the f1-rook can venture there. Even more important though is the fact that White is removing his king from a possible check on d4, which sets up a nasty threat, to which I cannot find a defence. This threat is 23 Kxg7! ; for example, 22... f5 (the only way to stop 23 Kxg7 , 22... Kb7 23 Kxg7! Kxg7 24 Qf6+ and Black can't stop mate) 23 gxf6 gxf6 24 Wg4+ Kh8 25 Qxf6+ . This would have been a brilliant way to continue as even the king harmonizes in the attack

22... Wb3 23 Qc3

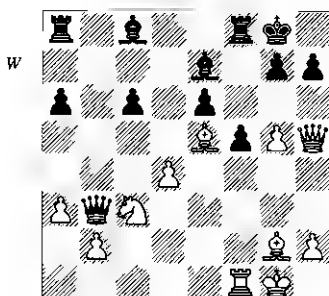
White has a big advantage

23... f5 (D)

24 gxf6!

24 Kxg7? Kxg7 25 Wb6+ is another tempting option in view of lines like 25... Qf7? 26 Kxc6 Na7 27 Kxh7# and 25... Qg8? 26 g6 hxg6 27 Wxg6+ Kh8 28 f3+- . However, Black can defend by 25... Kh8 26 g6 f7 27 gxf7 Kd7 , which is a good deal less clear.

24... Kxf6



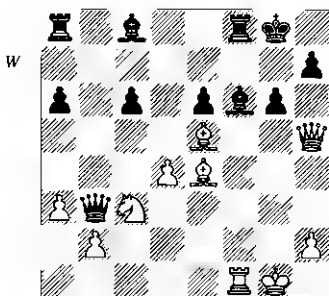
24. gxf6 was a better try but things are still bad; for example, 25 Kd4! Kf7 26 Kxh7+ Kxh7 27 Wd8+ Kg7 28 Wxe7+ Kh6 29 Kxf6+ Kg5 30 Kd4+ (all the white pieces are having a good time!) 30... Kh5 31 Wxh7+ Kg4 32 Kf4#

25 Kd4+-

Black has no defence.

25... g6 (D)

25... h6 also loses, to 26 Wg6 , exploiting Black's weaknesses on the light squares.



Now White has a rather simple way to destroy the kingside. Can you see it?

26 Kxg6!

An obvious but strong sacrifice, if Black accepts it he will be mated in a few moves.

26... Na7 27 Kxf6 Kxf6 28 Kxh7+ Kg7 29 Kxf6 Kxf6 30 Wg6+ Ke7 31 Wg7+ Kd8 32 Wxa7 Wxb2 33 Kc5 Kc1+ 34 Kg2 e5 35 Wb6+ 1-0

Game 14

Nigel Short – Jan Timman

Tilburg 1991

Alekhine Defence

This game dates back a bit but it does demonstrate a very unique idea, which I think is ideal for this chapter. Short utilizes the power of all his pieces but one stands out – the king!

In a position where there are many pieces still on the board, the lone white king marches bravely up the board to confront its counterpart. A unique idea!

1 e4 ♟f6 2 e5 ♞d5

The Alekhine is a provocative opening. Black loses time and space but hopes that White's extended pawns can be attacked at a later stage. Recently this opening has gone out of fashion at top level, probably for a reason.

3 d4 d6 4 ♞f3

4 c4 ♞b6 5 f4 is one of the sharpest ways of countering Black's opening, but White is making a heavy commitment with so many pawn moves.

4...g6 5 ♞c4 ♞b6 6 ♞b3 ♞g7 ♞e2

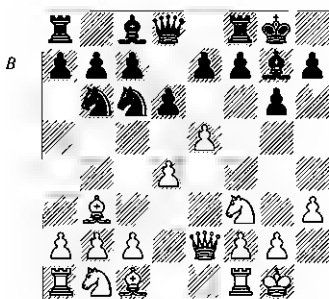
I prefer White's position, as the advanced e-pawn gives him plenty of attacking options. There are some other interesting possibilities though, notably 7 ♞g5¹, aiming directly at one of Black's weak spots, f7. Then Black has a choice between the sharp 7...e6 and 7...d5, shutting out White's bishop on b3, but relaxing the pressure on e5. Black has reached a structure similar to the French Defence, yet his light-squared bishop on c8 is not blocked in, which should work to his advantage.

7...♞c6 8 0-0 0-0

If Black plays 8...♞g4², there is a cheeky tactic: 9 ♞xf7+! (a trick that all Russian schoolboys will undoubtedly know about!) 9...♞xf7 10 ♞g5+ ♞g8 11 ♞xg4 +–

9 h3! (D)

Harmonizing your own army will work best if you deharmonize your opponent's pieces too! This is a good example of that – the pawn on h3 prevents...♞g4, which would be a very useful move for Black, as it puts pressure on White's



main asset, the e5-pawn. If White is forced to play exd6 then all of a sudden Black's dark-squared bishop starts to look very useful. At the moment the bishop on g7 is just a big pawn, shut out of the game.

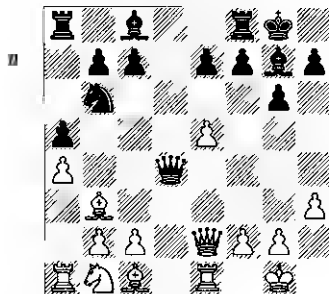
9...a5

9...♞a5, eliminating White's powerful bishop on b3, is possible but White retains a nice space advantage after the simple 10 ♞c3 ♞xb3 11 axb3 ±.

10 a4 dxe5 11 dxe5 ♞d4

Black's position is cramped, so it is a good idea for him to exchange pieces.

12 ♞xd4 ♞xd4 13 ♞e1 (D)



Now that the opening is over it is probably a good time to assess the position and to try to work out what both sides may be thinking.

The main problem for Black is White's e5-pawn. There is a constant threat of e6, on top of which the a2-g8 diagonal is well under White's control.

Black's position is reasonably solid but it is hard to see how he can improve it. The move 9 h3 has caused Black an annoying problem. Where should he place the c8-bishop?

White's pieces have a lot more potential than Black's, as they can come over to pester Black's kingside.

13...e6

This prevents White from ever playing e6 but it comes at a cost. Black now has problems with the weak dark squares around his kingside just look at the f6-square. If White can place his dark-squared bishop on that square an attack will become very possible.

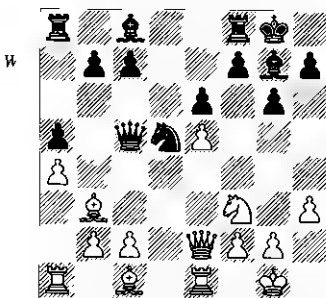
14 ♖d2

The knight is better placed on f3 than c3, as it has an easy route to Black's king via g5.

14...♗d5

14. ♗d7 had been played against Short in an earlier game. 15 c3 ♗c5 16 ♖f3 ♗c6 17 ♗e3 ♗e7 18 ♗g5 ♗c5 19 ♖d4 ± Short-Hennigan, British Ch, Swansea 1987. White has a nice attacking position.

15 ♖f3 ♗c5 (D)



How should White apply more pressure to the weakened dark squares around Black's king?

16 ♗e4!

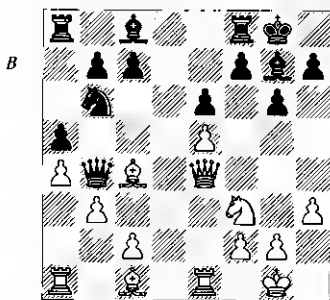
White is looking at each piece in turn and thinking where they are most suitably placed. The white queen wants to reach h4, where it puts pressure on Black's king, most notably the dark squares f6 and h6.

16...♗b4 17 ♗c4!?

A very interesting decision. Short figures that the bishop on b3 has played its role. It has forced the weakness 13 e6, so he does not mind swapping it off. Once Short has swapped it off he is guaranteed a good attack as we shall see in the game.

The other option was to win a pawn but this makes Black's life a lot easier, as his moves will become more natural to play. After 17 ♗xd5 exd5 18 ♗xd5 ♗e6 White may have an extra pawn but Black has two bishops and a well-placed queen. The move chosen in the game is certainly better from a practical viewpoint.

17...♗b6 18 b3! (D)



White allows his pawns to be doubled so as to retain attacking chances.

18...♗xc4 19 bxc4 ♗e8

Or

a) 19...♗d7 20 ♗a3 ±.

b) 19...♗d8 20 ♗g5 gives White a tempo.

One attacking plan is ♗h4, ♗f6 and ♗g5.

20 ♗d1

White takes a time-out so as to put a stop to Black's counterplay by preventing ... ♗d7-c6. Placing a rook on an open file is obviously a good plan too. Just look at where the white rooks end up later in the game!

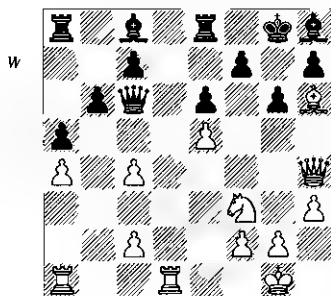
20...♗c5 21 ♗h4 b6

21... ♖xe5? 22 ♖a3 ♜c6 23 ♜xe5 +.

22 ♖e3 ♜c6

It is more natural to bring the queen over to the kingside to help defend, but after 22 ♜f8 White's attack looks too strong: e.g. 23 ♜g5 h6 (23... h5 24 ♖ab1 {g4 is coming} 24... ♖xe5? 25 ♜e4 +-) 24 ♜e4 g5 25 ♖xg5! hxg5 26 ♜xg5 ♜h8 (26 ♜e7 27 ♜f6+ ♜f8 28 ♖d4! + intending 29 ♖h4 and 30 ♖h8+) 27 ♖d4 + and Black cannot deal with White's threats

23 ♖h6 ♖h8 (D)



Black must try to hold on to this bishop in order to defend the dark squares

24 ♖d8

Tying Black down

24... ♖b7?

John Nunn points out that 24 ♖d7! 25 ♜d4 ♖axd8 26 ♜xc6 ♖xc6 gives Black good drawing chances.

25 ♖ad1 ♖g7

This was played to stop 26 ♜e7.

25 ♜xa4 is met by 26 ♜e7! ♖xf3 27 gxf3 ♜c6 28 ♖g5! followed by 29 ♖ld7 +.

26 ♖d7! ♖f8

It is becoming difficult for Black to find any constructive moves, for example: 26 ♖xh6 27 ♜xh6 ♜xa4 28 ♖xf7! ♖xf7 29 ♜g5+ ♜g8 30 ♜xh7+ ♖f8 31 ♜f7#, 26 ♜e4 27 ♖xf7! ♖xh4 28 ♖xg7+ ♜h8 29 ♜xh4 +- , 26... ♖xe5 27 ♖xf7! ♖xf7 28 ♖xe5+ +- or 26 ♜xa4 27 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 28 ♜f6+ +-.

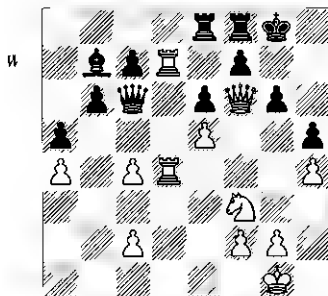
27 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 28 ♖ld4

A useful square, as sometimes the rook can be transferred over to h4

28... ♖ae8 29 ♜f6+ ♜g8 30 h4

With the plan of 31 h5, 32 h6 and 33 ♜g7#. Robin Smith pointed out a simpler win in *Modern Chess Analysis*. 30 ♜h4!, intending f3, ♜xg6 and ♖h4

30... h5 (D)



Black's position is the kind of thing grandmasters have nightmares about. Finding a move is becoming tricky and finding a plan impossible. What is the only white piece not taking part?

31 ♜h2!!

Bringing the last piece into the attack, which just happens to be the king! Reuben Fine once said, "The king is a strong piece; use it!" This may be true but you also have to be very careful when using your king!

Just watch that king go – it makes a run that any escaped convict would be impressed with. This idea works because Black is so passive; there is nothing he can do to stop White's plan. The only move that Short really had to calculate was 31... ♖c8, which doesn't work

31... ♖c8

31 ♖c8 allows 32 g4! with a winning attack, as f3 is not under attack any more.

a) 32... ♖xd7 33 gxf5 (threatening 34 h6) 33... gxf5 (33... ♜h7 34 ♜g5+ ♜h6 35 ♜xf7+ ♖xf7 36 ♜xg6#) 34 ♜g5+ ♜h7 35 ♜xh5+ ♜g7 36 ♖g4#

b) 32 ♖xg4 33 ♜g5! ♖xd7 (33... ♖b7 34 f3 gxf3 35 ♖xf7 +; 33... g3+ 34 ♖xg3 ♖xd7 35 ♜h2! followed by h5) 34 h5 +.

32 ♜g3! ♖ce8 33 ♜f4! ♖c8 34 ♜g5! 1-0

Black gave up one move before touchdown

4 Locating the Weak Point

One of the main ideas of philosophy is the search for the goal rather than the goal itself. After attaining the goal, the person may be feeling rather let down, yet whilst searching for the goal the person will feel energized. This is certainly not true in chess! I am sure most of you will feel happier when you have attained the goal and won the game.

This chapter is all about formulating a plan. One of the best ways to do this in chess is to locate a weakness in your opponent's position, with the idea of attacking that weakness.

It is impossible to play a successful game if you have no idea what you are doing. Even though I tend to get this feeling far too often during my own games it is not recommended. It is important to try to set yourself an aim and then to try to achieve this aim. I suppose the same can be often said in life.

The games in this chapter demonstrate this process of locating a weak point and then putting a plan into motion to take advantage of this weak point.

Game 15

Daniel Gormally – Zbynek Hraček

European Team Ch, Gothenburg 2005

Queen's Indian Defence, 4 a3

This game is a good example of a plan coming together.

Early in the game Black plays the move 7...g6. This in itself is not a mistake but later on when Black has castled and his dark squared bishop has abandoned its duties, the g6 pawn becomes a tempting target. White obliges with the thematic move 11 h4! and from then on the game revolves around whether White can successfully land an attack against the weakened black king.

One must always be careful about the effects of pawn moves that weaken the king's position, no matter how well motivated they might seem at the time. Another example is shown in Game 20, Dreev-Tiviakov, from Chapter 5.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 e4 ♙e6 3 ♘f3

This move avoids the Nimzo-Indian Defence, which starts after 3 ♘c3 ♙b4

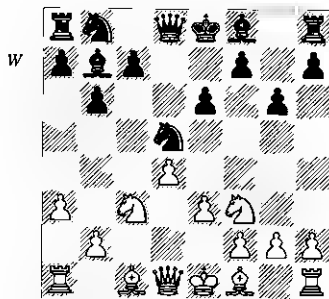
3...b6 4 a3

This is the main alternative to 4 g3

4 ♘c3 is another way that White can continue, not fearing 4...♙b4, with a hybrid of the

Nimzo-Indian and Queen's Indian. Like most openings, there have also been thousands of games in this line. Black can also reply 4 ♙b7, when 5 a3 transposes back to our main game.

4...♙b7 5 ♘c3 d5 6 cxd5 ♘xd5 7 e3 g6 (D)



The motivation behind this move is to reach a position akin to a Grünfeld in a line such as 8 ♙b5+ c6 9 ♘d3 ♙g7 10 e4 ♘xc3 11 bxc3 c5,

which led to a victory for Black in the famous game Kasparov Korchnoi, Candidates (1), London 1983

8 ♖xd5

White opts for a different approach, in which the move ♗g6 will be less appropriate, and the bishop not so well placed on g7.

8...exd5 9 b4

A positional move, trying to hold down any pawn-breaks by Black, mainly ...a5 and ...c5. If Black can't open the position up on the queen side then his bishop on b7 will be bad

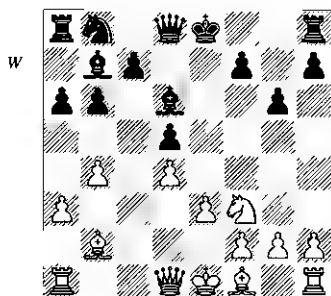
9...♙d6

Black reckons that with this central pawn-structure, the bishop belongs on this active square. However, this leaves Black's pawn on g6 looking very odd. When deciding upon a plan, a player should always look for targets to attack, and in this position g6 is an obvious one. 9...♙g7 is the natural move, as it defends the dark squares around the kingside but it does have some negative points. On g7 the bishop can only look at and admire White's pawn on d4, which blunts it out of the game. On d6 the bishop aims at h2, which may be useful if White castles.

10 ♙b2

If Black ever plays ...c5, the a1-h8 diagonal will become very useful for White.

10...a6 (D)



As stated before, the pawn on g6 and the dark squares around Black's kingside are weak. What is one way that White can continue, in order to attack these weaknesses?

11 h4!?

And they're off. White aims to take advantage of Black's weakening move ...g6 by using the h-pawn as a battering ram. This is a novel approach as many players would simply develop normally and castle (i.e. 11 ♖d3 and 12 0-0). The text move is double-edged as White will find it hard to castle safely now. Gormally is an aggressive player who likes to stir things up so the move perfectly suits his style.

11...♙d7 12 h5 0-0

This looks brave but White was threatening to capture on g6. Other options were:

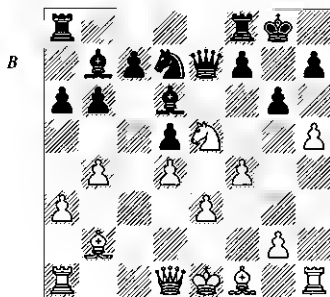
a) 12 ♖f6 guards h8, but Black still has to castle somewhere. 13 ♖d3 ±

b) 12 ♗5 is positionally suspect as it weakens the f5-square but it does contain an interesting plan. 13 ♖d3 g4!? 14 ♖e5 (14 ♖h4, heading for f5, is probably better: 14...g3 15 f4 ±). 14...g3!?. Black is trying to weaken the dark squares and pawn-structure on White's kingside.

13 ♖e5

The knight takes up a central position. White also understood that his queen was needed over on the g-file or h-file to help the attack. The queen may now swing over via f3 or g4.

13...♗e7 14 f4 (D)



Supporting the strong knight. The only way that Black can budge this piece is to play ...f6 at some point so White should always keep an eye out for this move. The problem with ...f6 is that g6 becomes very weak.

14...c5

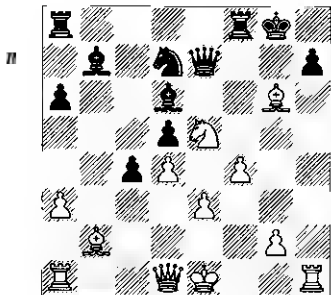
Black seeks counterplay in the centre.

15 bxc5 bxc5 16 ♔d3 c4 17 hxg6 fxg6

17...cxd3 eliminates a key attacking piece. Then 18 ♖g4 fxg6! is roughly equal, while 18 ♖xh7 ♕f6 19 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 20 gxf7+ ♔g7 is unclear.

18 ♔xg6!? (D)

Consistent with White's plan of destroying the g6-square. Whether this move is totally sound is debatable, but it is consistent, and most certainly dangerous. 18 ♔c2 is the softer approach, but by 18...♕xe5 19 dxe5 ♔c5 Black removes the strong knight and creates play of his own.



18...hxg6 19 ♖g4

Black's kingside looks shaky but he has good chances of a successful defence because he has so many of his own pieces guarding his king

19...♕f6

19...♕xe5 is the other sensible option. After 20 dxe5 ♖g7 21 ♔d4! the bishop on d4 is a monster of a piece, while e6 is always an unpleasant move that Black has to look out for. White has very good compensation.

20 ♖h3

20 ♖xg6+ does not help the attack as Black's king is safe after 20...♖g7.

20...♔xe5

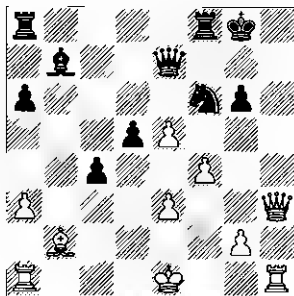
20...♖g7?? does not work now due to 21 ♖e6+ +.

21 dxe5 (D)

21...♕h7

21 ♕h5!?, with the idea of launching a mini counter-attack, is very interesting. For example, 22 g4 d4 and now,

B



a) 23 g4h5? loses to 23...♔xh1 24 ♖xh1 c3! 25 ♔c1 d3 26 ♖d5+ ♔h8 27 ♖xd3 ♖h4+

b) 23 ♖h2 leads to more chaos. 23...c3 24 g4h5 cxb2 25 ♖xb2 is unclear.

22 ♔d4

The position has calmed down. White has compensation due to his strong pawns on e5 and f4, strong bishop on d4 and open h-file but Black has stopped all of White's main threats and he remains material up.

22...♔c8!

The bishop was doing little on b7, but it plays a much more active role on c8.

23 g4 ♖b8 (D)

Black could take time to play one more safe move, namely 23 ♖f7 the rook does a great job here. It overprotects h7, which is Black's main weakness. 24 f5 gxf5 25 gxf5 ♔xf5 26 ♖g1+ and now:

a) 26...♔f8? 27 ♖h6+ ♖g7 (27...♔e8 28 ♖c6+ +-) 28 e6+ +

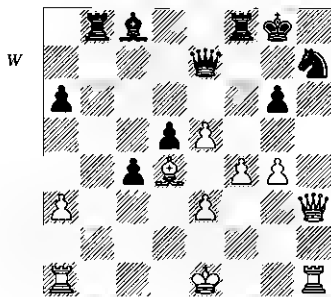
b) 26...♖g7? 27 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 28 ♖xf5 ♖g1+ 29 ♔d2 ♖g2+ 30 ♔c3 ♖b8 31 ♖b1 +

c) Black needed to find 26...♕g5!, which puts his own piece in a pin. After 27 ♖g2! ♔c8 28 ♖xg5+ ♖xg5 29 ♖xg5+ the position is roughly equal.

What logical move should White play here to target Black's weak point?

24 ♖h6

Attacking g6! 24 ♔c5, winning back material, was the other option, but this takes the pressure off Black's position. After 24 ♖g7 the game heads towards a draw. 25 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 26 ♖xh7 ♔xh7 27 ♔xf8 ♔xg4 =



The bishop is a very strong piece on d4, and the text-move keeps the tension and seeks to continue the attack

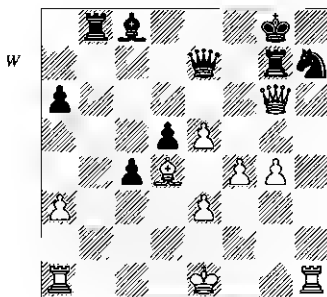
24...f7?

Black really needs to meet 25. ♖xg6+ with 25...♗g7, but the immediate 24.. ♗g7? fails to 25 e6 ♖xh6 26 ♖xh6 ♗xe6 27 ♖xg6+ ♔f7 28 f5! +, while after 24 ♗f7? 25 f5! Black's kingside implodes. 24. ♖b7! appears to hold. 25 ♖xg6+ ♗g7 26 ♖xg7+ (retaining the queens by 26 ♗d6!? ♖xg4 27 ♖xd5+ ♗e6 is unclear) 26. ♖xg7 27 g5 ♗f5 is a big improvement for Black compared with the game

25 ♖xg6+ ♗g7 (D)

25...♗f8 was Black's other choice but his position is unenviable after 26 f5 +.

What tactical blow now gives White a stable advantage?



26 ♖xh7! ± ♖xg6 27 ♖xe7 ♗xg4

White has the advantage but Black retains some chances due to the opposite coloured bishops.

28 ♖c7

28 ♔f2 was also strong, allowing White's al-rook to move to h1 and hopefully at some point h8!

28...♗f5 29 ♔f2 ♖b1

Or 29...♗e4 30 ♖g1 ♖xg1 31 ♔xg1 ♖b1 + 32 ♔f2 +.

30 ♖xb1 ♗xb1 31 a4

The rest is relatively simple.

31...♗f5 32 a5 ♖f8 33 ♗c5+ ♗e8 34 ♖e7+ ♗d8 35 ♖f7 ♗e4 36 f5 +- ♖g2+ 37 ♔f1 ♖g5 38 ♗e7+ ♗e8 39 ♖xg5 ♔xf7 40 e6+ 1-0

This shows just how successful those central pawns were!

Game 16

Evgeny Bareev – Eduardas Rozentalis

European Team Ch, Pula 1997

English Opening

This game demonstrates just how powerful bishops can be on an open board. White's bishops dominate Black's position. Both of them are looking expectantly at the black king, waiting for an opportunity to strike

Black's main weakness is his g7-square. White has double power lined up against it: the rook on g1 and the dark squared bishop on b2. Together they are too much for Black.

What I like about this game is how easy White's win is made to look. This can be put down to White playing simple, good moves.

1 c4 e6 2 ♘c3 ♗b4

This is a slightly irregular line. Black aims for a Nimzo-type position but White has yet to commit his d-pawn, which gives him more options

3 ♗b3

Asking Black's bishop the question straight away I like this simple way of playing. Depending on how Black replies, White's plan becomes clearer and therefore easier to play.

3...♖c6

Other options include

a) 3...a5 4 a3 ♖xc3 5 ♜xc3 ±. As in the main game, g7 is weak and White has the advantage of the two bishops

b) 3...♗a5!? looks rather odd but Black is trying to benefit from the slightly offbeat placing of White's queen. 4 ♖f3 ♖f6 5 d4 d5 6 ♗g5 dxc4 7 ♜xc4 ♜d5 =

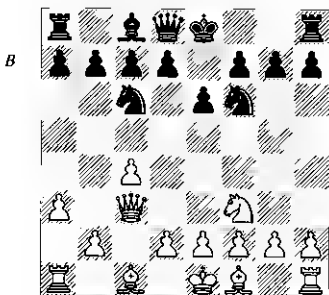
4 ♖f3

4 ♖d4 was the rather cheeky threat.

4...♖f6 5 a3 ♖xc3

Black finds it hard to retreat his bishop after moving it all the way out to b4. White should have a slight advantage after 5...♗e7 6 d4 d5 7 cxd5 exd5 8 ♗g5 ± as Black would like a pawn on c6 rather than a knight, d5 is a target. 5...♗c5?? 6 e3 is a different game

6 ♜xc3 (D)

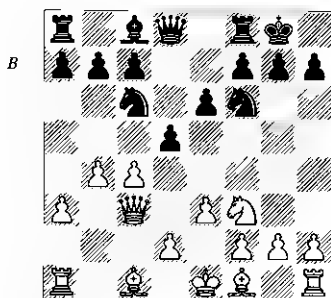


6...d5?

The first serious mistake from Black. After this move, White's dark squared bishop will always be a nuisance for Black along the a1-h8 diagonal. Black will find it very hard to play ...e5, which is an important move as it blocks out White's dark-squared bishop. Black's remaining bishop is also bad now; it was much better to try to develop it to f5 or g4. Black should have closed the a1-h8 diagonal with 6...d6 intending ...e5. After 7 d4 White has a

pleasant space advantage but Black's position is better than the one arrived at in the game

7 e3 0-0 8 b4! (D)



We can now locate Black's potential weak point, the g7 square. As soon as White gets his bishop to b2 there will be some serious pressure along the a1-h8 diagonal. To make matters worse for Black, his king is placed over there, so an attack on the g7-square has every chance of delivering checkmate

8...♖c4 9 ♜c2 ♖g5

9...♗d7 10 ♖d3 f5 11 ♗b2 ± and Black is dominated on the dark squares

10 ♗b2 ♗d7

10 ♖xf3+ 11 gxf3 allows another white piece to apply pressure to the g7-square: 12 ♗g1 is coming. If Black attempts to block the a1-h8 diagonal with 11...d4 White just plays 12 b5, for example, 12 ♖e5 13 ♜e4 dxe3 14 fxe3 ±

11 cxd5

White simplifies matters by settling the structure in the centre. This is a good idea as White has noticed that he will get an advantage without any risk. Simple and good is best.

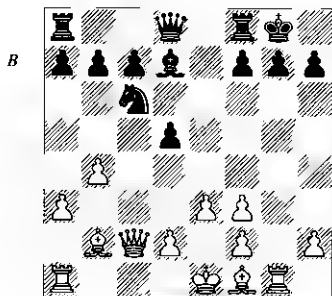
11...♖xf3+

Other options are worse. After 11...exd5? 12 ♖xg5 ♜xg5 13 b5! ♗f5 14 d3 ♖d8 15 ♜xc7 ± Black is a pawn down with a bad position to 'compensate' for it!

12 gxf3 exd5 13 ♗g1 (D)

Just like a homing pigeon, White is aiming for one target, the g7-square.

13...f6



Black must try to block out White's strong bishop on b2. The problem is that Black has now weakened his kingside pawn structure, especially the light squares around his king. Therefore White now aims at these new targets.

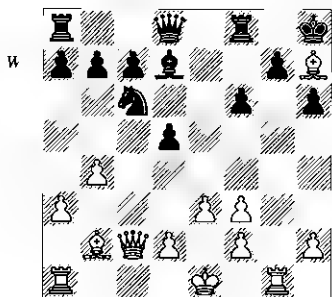
14 d3 h6

14...g6 fails to the standard 15 dxc6 +

15 dxc6!?

White could obviously build up his position by doubling on the g-file but he decides to force matters, calculating that Black's king can't withstand the following blows.

15...cxc6 (D)



What was the idea behind White's last move?

16 fxc7!?

White takes out Black's weak point! The ensuing attack is very dangerous for Black. White needed to have his 25th move planned when starting this combination, as up to that point

matters are quite forced and without his 25th move he would be in trouble.

16...g6 leads nowhere after 16...cxc7

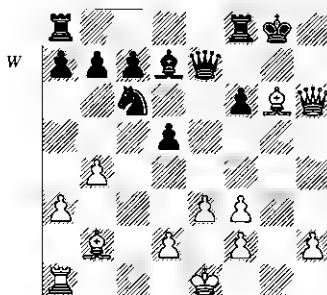
16...cxc7 17 gxc6 cxc8 18 fxc6 cxc7

18...f7? 19 e4+! cxc8 20 dxc5 wins for White.

19 dxc6+

19...e4+ was the other critical continuation. It gives White an advantage, but not as much as in the game: 19...cxc8 20 dxc5+ e6 (20...f7? 21 e2+ and 22 g1+) 21 gxc6+ (21 0-0-0? dxc5 22 g1+ cxc7 23 g7+ cxc8 24 fxc7+ cxc7 leaves Black with too many pieces in exchange for the queen) 21...cxc8 22 dxc6 cxc6 23 0-0-0 gxc8 24 fxc6+ fxc6 25 fxc6+ gxc7 26 gxc7+ cxc7 Black has some chances to hold this ending. I can understand why White did not choose to go down this variation. When attacking it is nearly always a disappointment to reach an ending!

19...cxc8 (D)



White needs to bring more pieces into the attack. How can he achieve this?

20 e2

Here comes the rook! He could also play 20 0-0-0, with the same idea in mind.

20...gxc7

Black's only chance of survival is to bring some pieces over to guard his king.

21 wh5

It would seem that Black is helpless to stop 22 g1 followed by a nasty check, such as 23 dxc6+

21...fxc8

This makes room for the black king, which will try to escape via f8. Other possible moves

a) 21... ♖h8? 22 ♜xd5+ ♜g7 23 ♜xd7+ ♜xg6 24 ♜g1+ ♜h6 25 ♜h3#.

b) 21... ♙e8 22 ♜g1+ -

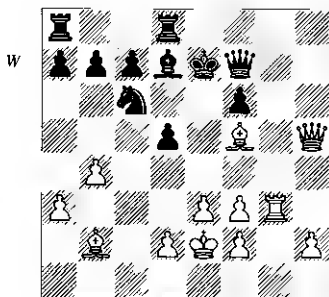
c) 21... ♙e5 22 ♙xe5 fxe5 23 ♜g1 ♙b5+ 24 d3 ♙e8 25 ♜g3! +-. Now that the rook is guarded by a pawn, 26 ♙xe8 is a threat.

22 ♜g1 ♙f8 23 ♜g3 ♙e7

There are no better options; for example, 23... ♙e5 24 ♙d3 ♙e8 (24... ♜f7 25 ♜h6+ ♙e8 26 ♙xe5 fxe5 27 ♙g6 +) 25 ♜h4 ♜f7 26 ♜h6+ ♙e7 27 ♜g7 -

24 ♙f5 ♜f7 (D)

24 ♜f8 gives White the added option of playing the strong 25 ♙xf6+! 25 ♜h7+ is also good; for example, 25... ♙d6 26 ♙xf6! ♜xf6 27 ♙g6 ♙e6 28 ♙xe6 + -



White certainly does not wish to exchange queens. What is the real point behind White's attack? Use the process of elimination, as there really is only one option for White here

25 ♙xf6+!

This is the move that White would have needed to have seen when playing 15 ♙h7+ and entering the ensuing complications. If this move had not worked, then White should have chosen a quieter line on his 15th move

25... ♜xf6

25... ♙xf6 makes life easy for White: 26 ♜g5+ ♙e5 27 ♜f4+ ♙f6 28 ♙g6+ -.

26 ♜h7+ ♜f7

Black's king cannot run any more; for example, 26... ♙d6? 27 ♜g6 + -

27 ♜g7 ♙e8?

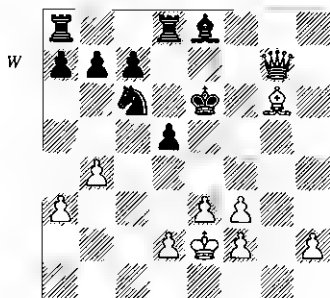
27... ♙e5 was the best defence, when White has a lot of work to do: 28 ♜h4+ ♙f8 (after 28... ♙e8 29 ♜xf7 ♙xf7 30 ♙g6 + White has the advantage even though he is material down, Black is very badly coordinated and will find it hard ever to get his a8-rook out into the game) 29 ♜xf7+ ♙xf7 30 ♙g6 ± Black is in a tangle but it is hard to tell how great White's advantage is

28 ♙g6

The attack works well due to Black's pieces being badly placed. He will always find it hard to coordinate them

28... ♜xg7 29 ♜xg7+ ♙e6 (D)

29... ♙d6? 30 ♜f6+ ♙d7 31 ♙f5#.



Should White retain the bishops or is it better to exchange them?

30 ♙h7!

By keeping the bishop on the board, White retains better attacking chances

30... ♙e7 31 f4! ±

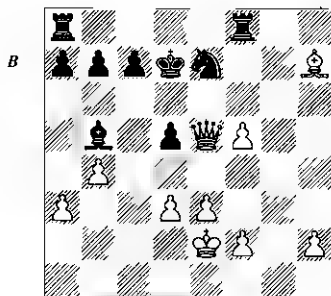
White's queen can now use the e5-square. The pawn-formation d2, f2, e3 and f4 will also prove to be a useful asset

31... ♙b5+ 32 d3 ♜f8 33 ♜e5+ ♙d7

Black's king keeps on running. 33... ♙f7 34 f5 + threatening 35 ♜e6+ and 36 f6

34 f5 + - (D)

The hard work is done. The combination of White's queen, bishop and f-pawn decides the day. If Black's pieces were better coordinated he would have chances to defend, but unfortunately for Black they are in a mess



34...Bae8 35 f6 ♖c8 36 ♗xd5+ ♜d6 37 ♙g6 ♞e6

Or

- a) 37... ♜d8 38 ♙f5+ ♜e8 39 ♗e6#
b) 37... ♜a8 38 ♗d4 and White's pawns are ready to roll by f4, e4, etc.

38 ♙f5

White's remaining pawns will decide the result of the game

38... ♜xf6 39 ♙xe6+ ♜xe6 40 h4 ♜e7 41 ♗c5 a6

It was better to surrender the a-pawn but the game would still be lost: 41 c6 42 ♗xa7 and White's pawns will decide the game.

42 ♗xc7+ ♙f6 43 ♗d8+ ♙f7 44 ♙d2

This stops ♜e4.

44... ♙f5 45 ♗c7+ ♞e7 46 ♗f4 ♙e6 47 e4 ♜d4 48 ♗h6+ ♙d7 49 ♗f6 1-0

Game 17

Veselin Topalov – Ruslan Ponomariov

Sofia 2005

Queen's Indian Defence, 4 g3 ♙a6

This game has much in common with Game 7 (Topalov-Anand) from Chapter 2. White quickly realizes that Black's king is his weakest point and a target for attack.

Most of Black's pieces around move 14 are over on the queenside, whereas White has two bishops placed on dangerous squares which strike out at Black's king. White starts an attack at this point and finishes it with an especially nice touch on move 18.

1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♜f3 b6 4 g3

Topalov has had a lot of success with this line which on the surface looks harmless enough. White often makes matters exciting by sacrificing material to gain the initiative. Tactics on the h1-a8 diagonal are often combined with the move d5. These are just a couple of things that Black must watch out for

4... ♙a6

4.. ♙b7 is another option. Then White can play an interesting gambit by 5 ♙g2 ♙e7 6 0 0 0-0 7 d5? exd5 8 ♜b4, with pressure in exchange for the sacrificed pawn

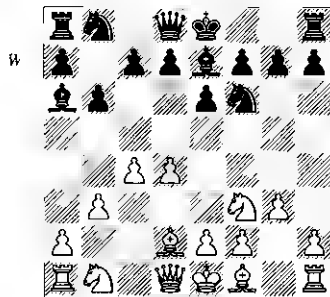
5 b3

5 ♗c2 is all the rage at the time of writing.

5... ♙b4+ 6 ♙d2

6 ♜bd2? is a mistake due to 6... ♙c3!, by which Black takes advantage of the move 5 b3, as the c3-square is now available to his pieces 7 ♜b1 ♙b7 8 ♙g2 ♙e4 ♚

6... ♙e7 (D)



Black's moves make a rather strange first impression but he has forced White's bishop to the d2 square, where it is a little clumsy, and induced the move b3, which would be more

useful if the bishop were still able to move to b2.

7 ♖c3 0-0

7 c6 was Anand's choice in the aforementioned game.

8 ♜c1

A prophylactic move aimed at ...d5. At least White will have the half-open c-file if Black plays this move. White also makes use of the fact that his bishop has left c1.

8...c6

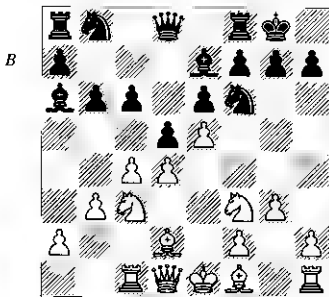
8 ♖c6?! develops Black's last piece but allows White to take over the centre, unchallenged, with 9 e4. The normal reply to this advance is ...d5, but then Black's knight on c6 looks rather strange.

9 e4 d5

Black is positionally forced to play this move; otherwise he will be overrun in the centre.

10 e5 (D)

Topalov has also played 10 ♖c2 here.



10...♗e4

10...♗fd7 is too passive and takes away the natural square for the b8 knight.

11 ♗d3

Black's strong knight on e4 must be exchanged.

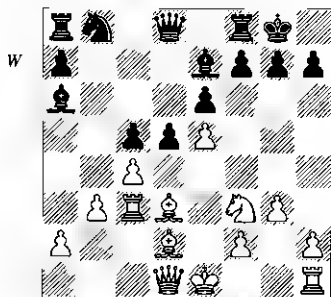
11...♜xc3 12 ♜xc3

The rook wants to stay on the c file. White's dark-squared bishop is also placed better on d2 compared to c3. On d2 it has options of joining in a kingside attack against the black king via either g5 or h6. On c3 the bishop is blocked in by White's d4-pawn.

12...c5

Black needs to get active. I would never recommend staying passive and cramped if there is a chance to break out.

13 dxc5 bxc5 (D)



It looks natural to castle here and continue with simple development, but try to look a bit deeper into the position. Black is active in the centre but he is still not fully developed, so it may be possible to start an immediate attack. how?

14 h4!

White quickly finds Black's weak point, which is his kingside, especially the h7-square.

If you remember the game Gormally-Hraček from earlier in the chapter, this move has striking similarities. White goes for a quick attack by playing h4, without castling.

You obviously need to make sure that your king is safe when undertaking such actions. It is also worth making sure that your pieces are placed on good squares before starting such an attack. Here the bishop on d3 is a particularly strong piece.

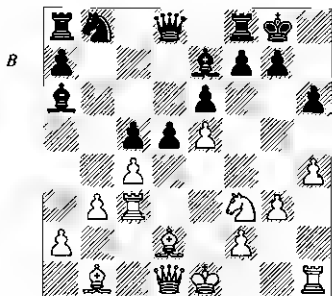
In many structures where White has advanced e5 early on and Black has castled, White's light squared bishop is very powerful. The French Defence provides many examples.

14...h6

This stops White from playing the Greek Gift (♗xh7+ followed by ♖g5+) but it creates more weaknesses around the black king. For example, another worry for Black now is a possible bishop sacrifice on h6. 14 ♖c6? fails to

pay attention to White's idea as it gets crushed by 15 ♖xh7+! the standard Greek Gift wins on the spot here: 15. ♖xh7 16 ♔g5+ (the h-pawn is very useful here!) 16 ♜g8 17 ♖h5 +-

15 ♖b1 (D)



Another standard plan 16 ♖c2 and 17 ♖h7# 15...f5

Black must attempt to block as many diagonals towards his king as possible. Other moves are worse; for example, 15... ♔d7 16 ♖c2 f5 17 exf6 ♔xf6 18 ♖xh6! (as stated before, the h6-pawn is a major target for a sacrifice by White) 18...gxh6? (18 ♔e4 19 ♖c1 +) 19 ♖g6+ ♜h8 20 ♔g5 +-, again h4 proves a very useful move!

16 exf6

The correct choice from White. The b1-h7 diagonal needs to stay clear for White's queen and bishop

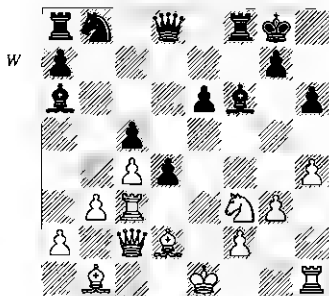
16...♖xf6 17 ♖c2

Black's kingside is a real mess, as his light squares h7, g6 and f7 are too exposed. White also has a lot of firepower all gazing at Black's king. When such a position is reached, i.e. one which instinctively feels good (for White!), it is always worth knocking down in search of a win. This is just what Topalov does.

17...d4 (D)

Now 18 ♖h7+ ♜f7 gives the black king a chance to escape but with so many white pieces ready to join in the attack, there may be a better move. Can you find it?

18 ♔g5!!



A brilliant, energetic move. White throws another piece straight at Black. This move introduces two more pieces to White's attack, the h1 rook and the h4-pawn, which is making a triumphant march towards Black's king. It is worth noting that a successful attack is very rare when only two pieces are attacking; you normally need three to checkmate.

18...hxg5

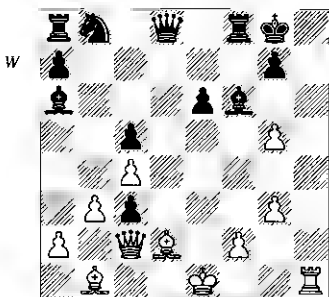
Black has no choice but to capture the knight.

19 hxg5

The win is relatively easy for White to calculate as Black's moves are forced. When calculating, always start with what seems to be the main and most critical line and move on to sidelines afterwards.

19...dxc3 (D)

There is no longer any defence for Black; for example, 19... ♖xg5 20 ♖h7+ ♜f7 21 ♖g6+ ♜e7 (21 ♜g8 22 ♔h8+! ♜xh8 23 ♖h7#) 22 ♖xg5+ +



20 ♖f4

Quiet but good.

20 ♖h8+ is also a killer move, for example, 20... ♖f7 (20. ♖xh8 21 ♖h7#) 21 ♖g6+ ♖e7 22 gxf6+ gxf6 (or: 22... ♖xf6? 23 ♖xg7+ ♖f7 24 ♖g5+ +-, 22... ♖d7 23 ♖d3+ ♖c8 24 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 25 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 26 fxg7 and the h-pawn finally becomes a queen – the pawn's reward for being a brave little nutter!) 23 ♖h7+ ♖d6 24 ♖f4+ ♖c6 25 ♖e4+ ♖b6 26 ♖c7+ ♖xc7 27 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 28 ♖xa8 +-. .

20... ♖f7 21 ♖g6+ ♖e7

The rest is easy, White simply mops up.

21... ♖g8 22 ♖h8+ ♖xh8 23 ♖h7#.

22 gxf6+ ♖xf6

Or

a) 22... gxf6 23 ♖h7+ ♖f7 24 ♖xf7#

b) 22. ♖d7 23 fxg7 + .

23 ♖xg7+ ♖f7 24 ♖g5+ ♖d6

24 ♖e8 25 ♖h8+ ♖d7 26 ♖xf7+ ♖d6 27 ♖xd8+ ♖c6 28 ♖xe6+ +-. .

25 ♖xf7

Black's king is too exposed to offer any hope of survival

25... ♖xg5

25... ♖d7 26 ♖f8+ ♖c7 27 ♖h7.

26 ♖h7

Everyone knows how strong rooks on the 7th are – this is no exception!

26... ♖e5+ 27 ♖f1 ♖c6 28 ♖e8+ ♖b6 29 ♖d8+ ♖c6 30 ♖e4+! 1-0

30 ♖xe4 31 ♖c7#.

Game 18

Alexei Korotylev – Andrei Kharlov

Russian Ch qualifier, Tomsk 2004

Queen's Gambit Accepted/Slav

Pawn power plays a major part in this game. White gradually suffocates Black on the king-side with his pawn-mass

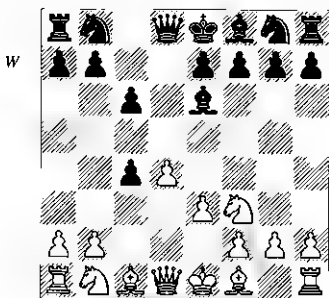
This game reminds me of a light rain shower that turns into a downpour. White's pawns eventually flood Black's position. Black played rather limply to let this happen. When it starts to rain, take cover or at least put a coat on; otherwise you're going to get soaked!

Black had opportunities to strike out against White's pawn formation, notably with 14...f6! or 15 f6!. When your position is becoming more and more cramped you should always look at ways to break out before the pressure becomes too much. It is also worth mentioning a couple of pawn-breaks that White passed up in this game: 9 b3 looked very strong and 13 e6 was interesting.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♖f3 c6 4 e3 ♖e6 (D)

Black chooses a slightly offbeat line in the hope of holding on to his c4 pawn. On the downside, Black's light-squared bishop will become a target on e6

Ideally, White would like to swap the f3-knight for Black's light-squared bishop. White



could then recapture the pawn on c4, which would leave him in control of the light squares. Generally in these Queen's Gambit structures, White's light-squared bishop is his best minor piece

5 ♖c3

Unbelievably, the blunder 5 ♖g5?? has been played by a grandmaster, whom I shall refrain from naming. After 5 ♖a5+ Mr Grandmaster resigned, realizing that his knight on g5 was going to be picked off!

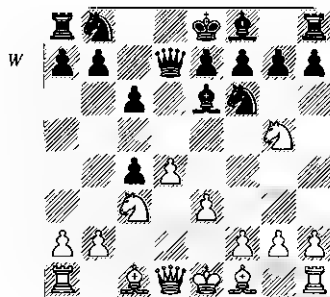
5...♟f6 6 ♟g5

Slightly better than 5 ♟g5?? ..

This move looks like the best way to try to gain an advantage. When your opponent plays a slightly strange variation, it can often be refuted by playing active, critical moves – on other words, by sharp aggressive play. If you play non critical moves then your opponent will have a chance to get away with his strange play.

6...♞d7 (D)

6 ..♟d5? is what White is looking for. After 7 e4 ♢ White is able to swap off Black's light-squared bishop.

**7 ♟e2**

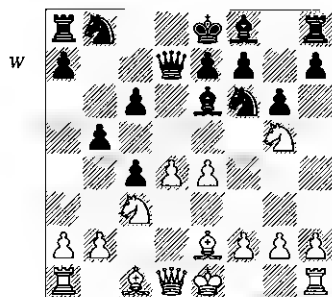
Another option which has been quite successful for White is 7 e4, trying to steamroller through the centre. For instance

a) 7 ..b5 8 f3!? (reinforcing the e4-square before taking action) 8 ..g6?! (forcing the issue by 8.. h6 makes more sense: 9 ♟xe6 ♞xe6 is unclear) 9 a4! (as we shall see in the main game, a4 is a typical way to break up Black's pawn structure on the queenside) 9.. b4 10 ♟e2 (Black's bishop on e6 just looks ridiculous) 10.. ♟a6 11 ♟xe6 ♞xe6 12 ♟f4 ♞d7 13 ♟xc4 and White was close to winning in Borges Arbumc, Alicante 2000.

b) 7...h6 8 ♟xe6 ♞xe6 9 e5 ♟bd7 (9...♟d5? 10 ♟xc4 ♞d7 11 0 0 e6 12 ♟e4 ♢ Gelfand Zilberman, Tel Aviv 1999) 10 ♞e2 ♟d5 11 ♞xc4 ♢ and White's two bishops give him a pleasant edge.

7...g6

Given that Black cannot play ..e6, his dark-squared bishop will need to develop via g7.

8 e4 b5 (D)

This type of position is fairly commonplace in queen's pawn openings and is one of the reasons why I personally play d4 and not e4 on move one

The position holds chances for both sides Black is a pawn up but White has a big centre and chances to attack Black's king. Some ideas for White include f4 f5, a queenside attack starting with a4 and e5, or a combination of the above I prefer White as a pawn is a small price to pay for such an active position

9 0-0

9 b3!? is the kind of pawn break that should always be high up on the list of critical moves that a player considers. Here it is an interesting possibility and maybe a very good one, for example, 9 cxb3 10 d5! (this makes sense now that White's light-squared bishop has access to b5) 10 ..cxd5 11 ♟xb5 ♟c6 12 ♟b2+ White's position looks very nice, his pieces are all taking up active roles whilst Black's pieces are placed on rather peculiar squares.

9...♟g7 10 e5 ♟d5 11 ♟ce4

White has located a major weakness in Black's position: the c5 square. It is a great outpost if White can land a knight there.

11...♟f5

Black needed to move his bishop away from e6, where it was a target. For example,

a) 11 ..0 0? leaves Black with a major problem on e6. After 12 ♟c5 ♞c8 13 ♟gxe6 fxe6

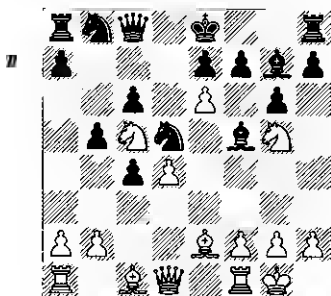
14 ♖g4 ♘c7 15 ♖g5 + Black's army has no coordination, and White's pieces are swarming all over him

b) 11 ... ♖a6?! 12 ♘e6 fxe6 (12 ... ♗xe6 13 ♖g4 f5 14 exf6 ♗xe4 15 fxg7 +-) 13 b3 cxb3 14 axb3 +- Black has far too many weaknesses, and the g7-bishop is also just a piece of dead wood.

12 ♘c5 ♗c8 13 g4

White figures that Black should be punished but maybe this is not the way to go about it, as this move also weakens White's kingside. Such double-edged moves should be thought about very carefully as they can backfire. In this position it can go wrong for White due to the open situation of his king.

13 e6! (D) is an interesting try



Often in positions where White has a pawn on e5, this pawn becomes a great lever for starting an attack. Pawn pushes combined with good pieces (two active knights here) can be very dangerous. Black has to consider the safety of his king at some point, so 13... 0-0, and now:

a) 14 exf7+ ♖h8 and Black is going to continue 15... h6 and then recapture the thorn of a pawn on f7, which will leave him with a good position.

b) Black's f5 bishop is defending the light squares around Black's king so eliminating it by 14 ♖g4 is a good idea. This is an example of looking at your opponent's best defensive pieces and trying to get rid of them. Then:

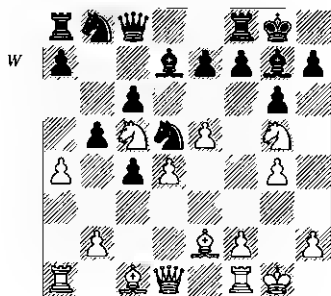
b1) After 14 ... ♖xg4?! 15 ♗xg4 Black's kingside looks very shaky, especially now that

White's queen has joined the attack. 15... f6 can be met by 16 ♘f7?! ♗, when White can consider h4 h5 to weaken Black's kingside further.

b2) 14... fxe6 15 ♘gxe6 with unclear consequences.

13... ♖d7 14 a4 0-0?! (D)

White's main attacking asset is his pawn on e5, it is the spearhead for his attack. Therefore Black should strike out against it, but how? By 14... f6! Black seeks a counterattack in the centre. This move is more effective now as White has lashed out with 13 g4. There can follow 15 exf6 exf6 16 ♘ge4 0-0 with unclear play. Black's position looks a lot safer without a big white pawn on e5



15 f4

White's kingside tidal wave has begun!

15... e3?!

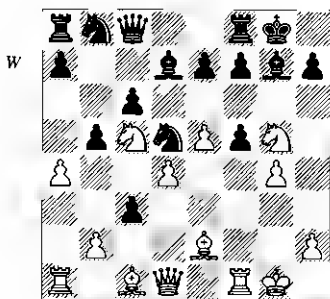
15... f6! is still Black's best move – he really does need to strike out against White's advancing pawn-mass on the kingside. After 16 ♘ge4 f5 17 gxf5 ♖xf5 Black has good control over some important light squares on the kingside, which gives him a comfortable game. 16 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 17 ♘e4 looks like White's best choice, with an unclear position.

16 f5!

After this strong move Black finds it hard to breathe. The idea is natural, as White has two good knights and Black is very cramped. 17 e6 is now a big threat. Computers tend not like this move at first, but over time they become more convinced by it. I think that Black is already in big trouble; intuition should tell any player this.

16...cxb2

16. gxf5 (D) brings about an important position to evaluate.



What are White's main assets here? And how do you keep them?

a) 17 gxf5? is unconvincing.

a1) 17 cxb2? is poor, as after 18 ♖xb2 ♕e3? Black wins material but loses the game 19 ♗d3 ♖xf1 20 ♖xd7! (20 ♖xf1 also gives White a very strong attack) 20...♖xd7 21 f6 +

a2) 17 ♖xf5 and White has no convincing way forward, as both 18 ♖xf5? cxb2 19 ♖xb2 ♗xf5 -+ and 18 ♖d3? cxb2 19 ♖xb2 ♖xd3 20 ♗xd3 (20 ♖xd3 h6 and Black is pushing White's pieces back) 20...♗g4+ ♣ are insufficient.

b) 17 ♖xd7! is correct because the most important feature of White's position are his pawns on e5 and f5. By capturing Black's light-squared bishop, White can keep these pawns stable. The breaks f6 and e6 are a constant threat to Black. The pawns also give White a large amount of space to build up his forces behind them. 17...♖xd7 18 gxf5 (the pawns amassed on d4, e5 and f5 are particularly worrying for Black) 18...h6! (Black's best chance - he must try to force the white pieces to less active squares) and now

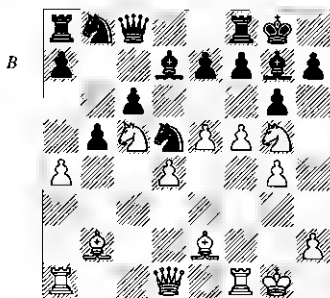
b1) 19 ♖xf7? is a bit rash and it demoralizes White's pawn-formation 19. ♖xf7 20 e6 ♖f6 21 exd7 ♗xd7 ♣

b2) 19 ♕e4 is sensible and leaves Black with ongoing problems about the safety of his king. After 19...cxb2 20 ♖xb2 ♕e3 21 ♗d3

♖xf1 22 ♖xf1 Black's position looks busted as his kingside is too weak.

Instead, Black needs to strike against White's pieces, and so should play 16...h6! 17 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 18 ♕e4 cxb2 19 ♖xb2 ♕e3 20 ♗d3 (20 ♗b3!?) 20...♖xf1 21 ♖xf1, when things are unclear; Black has a material advantage but can his king hang on?

17 ♖xb2 (D)

**17...h6**

17...♕e3? is very greedy. White's rook on f1 is rather irrelevant, whilst the black knight was performing a good central role on d5. 18 ♗b3! ♖xf1 19 f6g6! (19 ♖xf1? gxf5 20 axb5 is unclear) 19 ♖d2 (19 hxg6 20 ♗h3! + ouch!) 20 gxf7+ ♖h8 21 ♗c2 +.

18 ♖c1!

18 ♖xf7? is not necessary but an interesting attempt to destroy Black as quickly as possible. It is probably better to be patient though. After 18...♖xf7 19 e6 ♖f6 20 exd7 ♖xd7 21 ♕e4 ♖f7 22 f6g6 (I do not like the way that White has lost his strong pawn-formation on e5 and f5) 22...♖xf1+ 23 ♗xf1 ♖e3+ 24 ♖h1 hxg6 Black seems fine

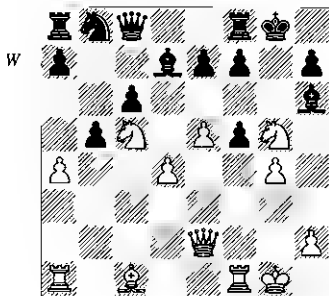
18...♖c3 19 ♗d3 ♖xe2+ 20 ♗xe2 gxf5 (D)

20...♖g7 is a computer recommendation but Black has lost too much time. 21 ♗g2 h6 22 ♖ge4 =

White needs to open up the protection around Black's king. By what means?

21 e6!

It is now time to use the pawns to expose Black's king.



21...d7

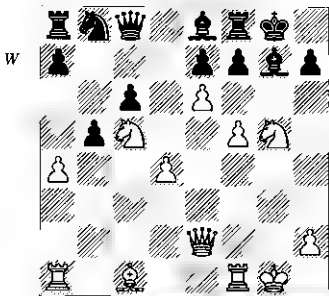
Or

a) 21 ...d8 is a desperate defensive try, but after 22 exf7+ dxf7 23 dge6 dxe6 24 dxe6 dxf6 25 gxf5 +- White's knight on e6 dominates Black's position.

b) 21 ...fxe6 22 dge6 dxe6 transposes to line 'a'

22 gxf5 d8 (D)

22 dxd4+ merely helps White get rid of another piece that was defending the kingside: 23 dxe3 dxe3+ (23... dxa1 24 Wh5 +-) 24 dxe3 h6 25 dgg3! hxg5 26 dgg5+ dh7 27 dff4 +-.



What would you play here for White?

Here are some clues. unless you can find an immediate win, it is logical to bring some pieces over to help attack Black's king. What is the only white piece that is not doing anything?

23 d3!

A nice swinger! The rook was useless on a1 so White brings it around so that it can join in the fun. White did have a tactical way to win as well.

a) 23 f6! (picturesque! Look at those pawns go!) 23 exf6 (23... dxf6 24 Wh5 dxe5 25 dxe5+ dh8 26 dxe7 dgg8+ 27 dh1 +-) 24 dxe7! dxe7 25 Wh5+ dgg8 26 e7 +-.

b) 23 dxe7! should transpose.

23...d8

23...dxd4+ 24 dxe3 dxe3+ 25 dxe3 +-

24 dgg3 +- dh8

24...dxd4+ 25 dxe3 dff6 26 dge4 dde5 27 f6! +.

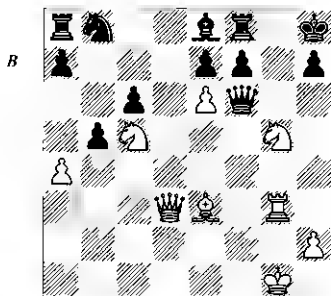
25 f6!

25 Wh5! is also a killer move: 25 h6 26 exf7 +-.

25...dxf6 26 dxf6 dxd4+

26...exf6 27 dde4! fxg5 28 e7 +

27 dxe3 dxf6 28 d3 (D)



28...d7

Nothing can save Black now, for example:

a) 28... d8+ 29 dgg2 ddb2+ 30 dd2 f5 31 dff7+! dxf7 32 ddc3+ dxc3 33 dxc3#

b) 28. dgg6 29 dff7+ dxf7 30 dd4+ dgg8 31 exf7+ dxf7 32 dgg6+ +-.

29 dff7+

The rest is easy

29...dxf7 30 exf7 d8+ 31 dgg2

One last little tease.

31...d8+

Draw?

32 dgg1 d8+ 33 dff1

No, I'm OK thank you..

1-0

5 Changing the Tempo

In chess, like many other activities, it is important to know when a change of situation is needed.

In music the beat is everything. This beat needs to flow through any piece of music. Only by listening to the beat can a musician create a masterpiece because only by manipulating the beat can a musician change the situation to his liking.

The same can be said about chess. A player should try to be in control of any situation. Even if the position is a complete mess, you should feel what needs to be done in order to improve your position. Try to let the game flow and understand where the game is flowing. For example, if you position your pieces so that they are aiming at your opponent's king, the way the game is flowing should be obvious. You want to open up your opponent's king at all costs in order to checkmate.

Sometimes it is necessary to change the tempo of a game and this can be done drastically. A shocking move, for example, can throw your opponent into a state of panic. Perhaps a sacrifice forces your opponent to defend and maybe a breakthrough can turn a calm position into a wild one.

The pros and cons of playing such a tempo-changing move should obviously be considered before the move is actually played. In this chapter, we shall look at such moves and see what they achieve.

Game 19

Vasily Ivanchuk – Alexei Shirov

Wijk aan Zee 1996

Queen's Gambit, Semi-Slav

This game is really all about White's 21st move. If you spot it, well done! It is worth noting that this game is very complicated so I have analysed some variations a bit deeper than I would have in other parts of this book.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♖c3 ♟f6 4 ♟f3 e6 5 ♗g5

This is White's most aggressive way of meeting the Semi-Slav. The bishop on g5 creates an unpleasant pin on the black knight. Black has two main ways to counter this pin: the move chosen in the game, which bravely grabs a pawn, and 5...h6, which seeks quieter life, although if White wishes, this can also lead to chaotic complications.

5...dxc4

5...h6 is the so-called Moscow Variation, asking White's bishop what its intentions are. He can either exchange by 6 ♗xf6, leading to rather tame positions, or gambit with 6 ♗h4, a

highly topical line leading to a very sharp game following 6...dxc4 7 e4 g5 8 ♗g3 b5

6 e4 b5 7 e5 h6

Forced, otherwise White wins a piece.

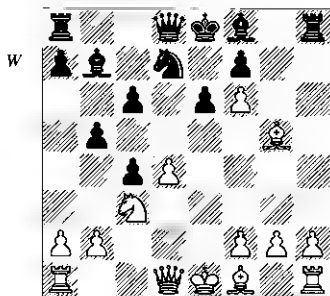
8 ♗h4 g5 9 ♜xg5

This is the traditional main line. 9 exf6 is also interesting and is featured in I.Sokolov-Shirov (Game 3 in Chapter 1).

9...hxg5 10 ♗xg5 ♟bd7 11 exf6 ♗b7 (D)

The position is very interesting. White has a powerful (but at the same time vulnerable) pawn on f6 which can be used to start an attack and hinder Black's pieces from developing. His king will also feel a bit safer than Black's on the kingside. Black's main trump is his queenside pawn-majority. The two breaks ...b4 and ...c5 are a constant annoyance for White.

12 g3 c5 13 d5 ♜b6 14 ♗g2 0-0-0 15 0-0 b4 16 ♜a4

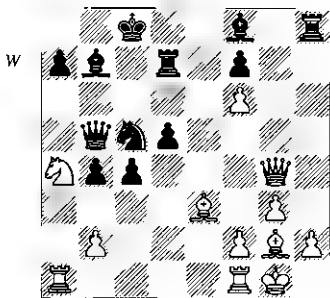


The old main line. The other main option is 16 ♖b1, by which White hopes to cause Black some problems down the b file

16...♖b5 17 a3

White's aim is to open Black up on the queen side where his king is hiding. To do this he needs to break up Black's strong pawn-formation over there 17 a3 also allows White's queen's rook to enter the attack, which as we shall see plays a crucial role.

17...exd5 18 axb4 cxb4 19 ♕e3 ♖c5 20 ♖g4+ ♔d7 (D)



So far both players have been following established theory. It is only now that White deviates. His next move is a real shocker but it does make sense

21 ♖g7!!

A brilliant idea! White sacrifices his queen so that he can take total control of the dark squares. The dangerous advanced pawn on g7

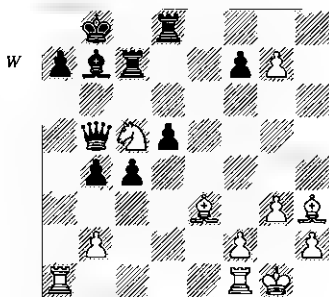
and Black's weakened king give White a powerful initiative.

This is a horrible move for anyone to face over the board. I expect that Ivanchuk had prepared this idea before the game but it would be nice to think that he found it over the board in an inspired moment. It has been found out recently that Black is probably OK if he plays accurately

21 ♖g7!! certainly changes the tempo of the game!

21...♕xg7 22 fxg7 ♔g8

It can hardly be wrong to attack White's big pawn on g7, but we should take a look at 22 ♔hd8 23 ♖xc5 ♕c7 24 ♕h3+ ♖b8 (D)



If White's knight were not on c5, then ♕xa7+ would be a very powerful move. What is the best way for White to open the g1-a7 diagonal?

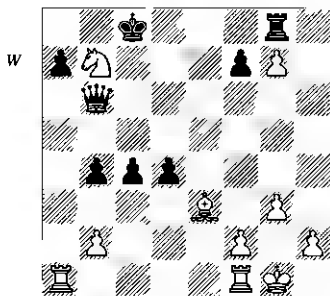
25 ♖e6! fxe6 26 ♕xa7+ ♖c8 27 ♕xe6+ ♔cd7 28 ♕d4 – it is important to prevent Black from playing ♖d4, which would open the long diagonal for his bishop. The resulting position is unclear

23 ♖xc5 d4?!

Black is trying to simplify matters somewhat a reasonable idea, but the specific tactics work in White's favour. Other options.

a) 23. ♔c7!! (retaining the rook) 24 ♖xb7 ♕xb7 25 ♔fd1 ♔d7 26 ♕d4 gives White good compensation – the d4-bishop is a beautiful piece, dominating the board and supporting the h pawn's advance all the way to h8. Black should probably try to remove the g7-pawn by 26...f5 and 27. ♔gxg7.

b) After 23...♙xg7, 24 ♖h3!? wins back a substantial amount of material, but 24...f5 25 ♙xf5 ♜f7 (or 25 d4 26 ♙xd4 ♜f7) has the idea of attacking the bishop wherever it goes on its diagonal. White has failed to demonstrate any clear path to an advantage in a number of games. Sadler suggested that 24 ♙d4! f5 25 ♙xd7 ♜xd7 26 ♜xa7 was messy, but easier for White to play 24 ♙xb7+ ♜xb7 25 ♙xb7 ♜b6 (D) 25...♜xb7 26 ♙xd4 ±



Black's aim is to prevent White's bishop from reaching d4, where it would be perfectly placed.

It may seem that White is in trouble here. He has two pieces attacked and he is already material down. Yet with his next move, the game starts to move seriously in his favour.

To find this key move, it would help to use the process of elimination, as a lot of White's options are simply bad for him.

26 ♙xd4!!

Yes! White must keep playing aggressively. After this, White's remaining pieces all work very well together attacking the black king. Other options:

a) 26 ♙f4?! ♙xb7 27 ♜fe1 ♜f6 and it is doubtful if White has enough compensation.

b) 26 ♜ad1?! dxe3 and, compared to the game, Black's pawn on e3 plays a major role.

26...♜xd4 27 ♜fd1!

An important move to spot

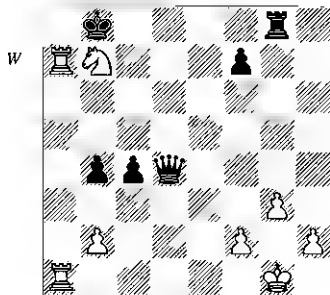
27...♜xb2

I am sure most players in Black's situation would grab the pawn on b2 and keep their

fingers crossed. Other options do not solve Black's problems either; for example.

a) 27...♜xd1+ (trying to survive in an ending, but the position is hopeless) 28 ♜xd1 ♙xb7 29 ♜d4 (29 ♜d7+ may also be good but the text-move is simpler and therefore the best choice; something needs to be simple in this game!) 29...♙xg7 30 ♜xc4 a5 31 ♙f4 ♙b6 32 h4 ♙b5 33 b3 ±

b) 27...♜xg7 28 ♜xa7 ♙b8 29 ♜d1 ♜d4 (D).



Paradoxically, White's knight on b7 has become out of play. What is the best way for it to re-enter the game?

30 ♙a5!! ± (very nice – the c6-square is a deadly place for the white knight) 30...♜d5 31 ♜b7+ (31 ♙xc4!?) 31...♙c8 (31...♜xb7 32 ♙xb7 ♙xb7 33 ♜a4 +) 32 ♙xb4 +.

c) 27...♙g4! looks best. Black's queen maintains contact with White's rook on d1, therefore preventing White from playing 28 ♜xa7 due to 28...♜xd1+. After 28 ♙d6+ ♙b8 29 ♜d5 c3! (29...♙xg7 30 ♜c5! and Black's queenside pawns will soon drop and so will the game) 30 bxc3 bxc3 ± White is better but Black can fight on.

28 ♙d6+

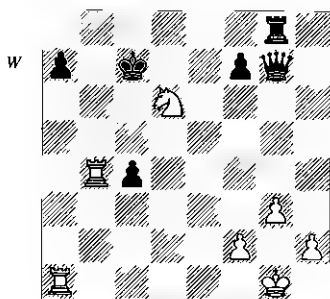
28 ♜xa7! is another option but Black has chances in the endgame thanks to his strong c-pawn. After 28...♙b8 29 ♜d1 ♜xa1+ (not 29...♜d4? 30 ♙c5! +) 30 ♜xa1 ♙xb7 31 ♜a4 ♙b6 32 ♙xb4+ ♙c5 33 ♙b7 ♙xg7 things are not so simple.

28...♙b8 29 ♜db1 ♜xg7?

Now life is easy for White. Black should try to protect his b pawn for as long as possible; for example, 29. ♖d2 30. ♔xc4 ♕c3 31. ♖a4 b3 32. ♔a5! (chasing the pawn down!) 32. b2 33. ♖b4+! ♕a8 34. ♖4xb2 ♕xa5 35. ♖b8+! +-,

30. ♖xb4+ ♕c7 (D)

30. ♕a8 31. ♖ba4 f5 32. ♔b5 ±



After White's next move, Black's king has no chance of escaping. Can you see the best way for White to keep Black's king boxed in?

31 ♖a6!

White's remaining pieces coordinate perfectly whilst Black's are stuck on the wrong side of the board. The black king has nowhere to run.

31... ♖b8

Other moves lose even more quickly, for example:

a) 31.. ♖d4 32. ♖xc4+ +-

b) 31. ♖g4 32. ♖xc4+ +-

c) 31.. ♖e5 32. ♖b7+ ♕d8 33. ♖xa7 and again White wins

32 ♖xa7+

White has another strong option in 32. ♖xc4+ ♕d7 33. ♖f4! +-,

32... ♕xd6 33. ♖xb8 +-

The position is now a technical win. White just needs to pick up Black's c-pawn and avoid any perpetual-check tricks

33... ♖g4

Or 33.. ♖c3 (aiming for 34.. ♖e1+ 35. ♖g2 ♖e4+) 34. ♖d8+ ♕e6 35. ♖g2 and White is winning. If now 35. ♖e1, then 36. ♖e8+ picks up the black queen,

34 ♖d8+ ♕e6 35 ♖a1 1-0

Game 20

Alexei Dreev – Sergei Tiviakov

Dos Hermanas 2003

Queen's Indian Defence, 4 a3

The opening Dreev chooses here has a solid reputation but the game is full of fireworks

White, by avoiding piece exchanges, maintains the tension and retains good attacking chances throughout the game. These attacking chances are mainly a consequence of White castling queenside and having a space advantage. White's pieces remain more active than Black's from start to finish

This all leads to a fiery finish. I especially like White's 20th move as it thematically takes advantage of Black's weakened kingside pawn-structure. In a matter of moves all the pawn protection which was covering the black king is removed and Black's king is left helpless.

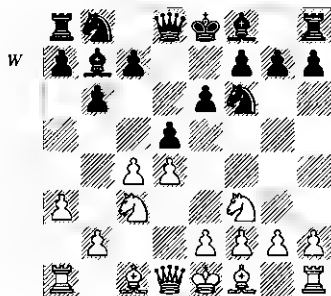
1 d4 ♔f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♔f3 b6 4 a3

This move, known as the Petrovian System, is aimed against Black playing .. ♔b4, as he does in Nimzo positions. On the negative side it spends a tempo on a pawn move that may prove irrelevant. White would ideally like to play e4 at some point as then his centre is very menacing but Black can normally stop this move.

In general 4 a3 is not the most demanding move, but as we see in this game Black still needs to respect it, as it has some powerful ideas behind it. 4 ♔c3 often transposes after 4. ♔b7 5 a3, while the traditional main line 4 g3 is the most common nowadays

4... ♔b7 5 ♔c3 d5 (D)

White was threatening to gain a significant advantage by playing d5 (now that .. ♔b4 is



ruled out), so Black stops this in the most direct way. Note that this is not a move Black was particularly keen to play just after fianchettoing his queen's bishop – in the lines after 4.g3, for instance, he generally prefers to retain a more flexible stance in the centre. So White can claim that by playing a3 he has provoked Black into playing a strategically undesirable move, but on the other hand the move a3 may prove irrelevant in the structures that now arise.

6.cxd5 ♖xd5

6...exd5 is similar to the Exchange Queen's Gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♖c3 ♖f6 4.cxd5 exd5) except for one main difference: Black would normally prefer to place his light-squared bishop on f5 or g4. It is badly placed on b7 as the pawn on d5 restricts its range. 7.g3 is generally regarded as being slightly better for White.

7.♗d2

Another rather slow-looking move but it does have a point (as most moves from grandmasters do!) Try to work out what White is aiming for here.

White eventually wants to play ♖c2 and e4, gaining space in the centre. Black's natural answer against this plan is to exchange knights with ...♗xc3. If White has to recapture by bxc3 then ...c5! is a good reply, aiming for counterplay against White's centre.

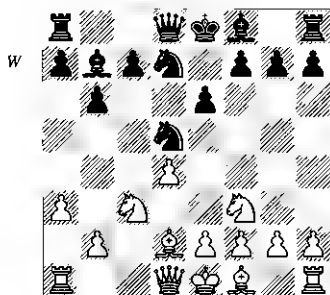
If White is able to answer ...♗xc3 with ♗xc3, his bishop becomes a lot more useful on the a1-h8 diagonal. For a start, ...c5 allows White to play d5 or dxc5, when his dark squared bishop will have an open diagonal to play on. g7 in particular would be a weak point for Black.

Watch how this rather simple idea works out perfectly for White in this game.

7...♗d7 (D)

7...♗f6¹⁹ is worth considering and may be Black's best plan. Black is aiming to stop e4 and is preparing counterplay with ...c5. Thus after 8.♖c2 c5! Black has successfully contested the centre.

As so often in the opening, it is necessary to play some sharp moves to maintain the balance, as passive moves will give your opponent the advantage. I feel that is the case in this game.



8.dxc5 ♗xd5

Try to work out what advantages and disadvantages this move has compared to 8...exd5.

On the plus side, Black's light-squared bishop is given more range on the a8-h1 diagonal. White though has the advantage of having a more fluid centre, e4 gives him two pawns in the centre. 8...exd5 would have kept the centre more fixed.

9.♖c2

Preparing e4 and queenside castling.

9...c5 10.e4 ♗b7 11.d5!

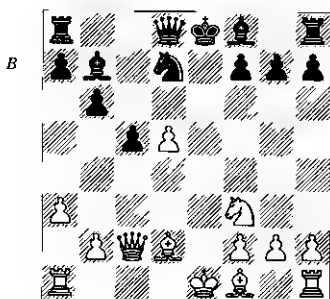
11.dxc5 would allow Black to develop a piece with tempo (either 11...♗xc5 or 11...♗xc5).

In choosing the text-move, White has to be careful that it does not just lose a pawn, but if it works it performs a couple of useful roles.

For a start, the pawn on d5 is a real pain for Black. The pawn-push d6 is something Black has to watch out for and his bishop on b7 is temporarily blocked in. The only thing that may be a problem is if the pawn becomes

weak, but as we shall see in the game this never happens

11...exd5 12 exd5 (D)



12...♙d6

12...♙d5? is too risky, as Black's line-up of pieces on the d-file becomes a target. After 13 0-0-0 ♙c6 14 ♙c3 f6 15 ♙c4 + Black's king is in a hopeless situation.

13 0-0-0 0-0 14 ♙b5!

A novelty at the time and a good one. ♙c6 is White's main idea

14...h6

Black could also try:

a) 14...♙f6 is saying come and get me! White can oblige with 15 ♙g5 h6 16 h4.

b) 14...a6 15 ♙c6 ♙c7 16 ♙xb7 ♙xb7 17 ♙h4! and White's attack looks dangerous.

15 ♙c3

The dark-squared bishop reaches its ideal square. From c3 it is a constant nuisance to Black's king.

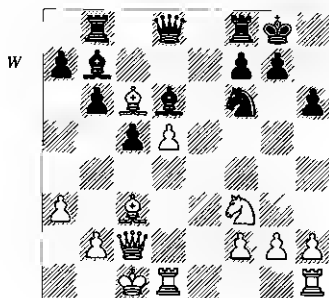
15...♙f6 16 ♙c6 ♙b8 (D)

16...♙c6 allows White's d1-rook to enter the game, which is a very risky policy. After 17 dxc6 ♙c8 18 ♙f5! ♙xc6 19 ♙e5 ♙c7 20 ♙c4 ± Black's pieces are in a tangle.

White has put all his pieces on prime squares so it is time to start thinking about a plan. By now you should know that most games in this book involve attacking the enemy king, so how would you go about hacking up Black's king?

17 h4!

March that pawn forwards! You might be seeing a common theme here.. I could have



actually done a whole separate chapter, just on using h4 to attack! This move creates the very strong threat of ♙g5 followed by ♙xf6 and ♙h7#. Black's reply seems rather forced.

17...♙g4

Or.

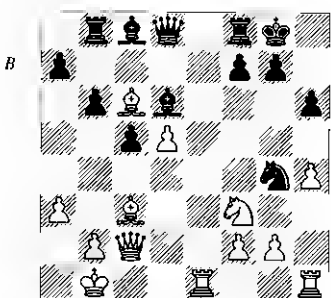
a) 17...g6? 18 h5! (opening up Black's king side is strong) 18 ♙xh5 19 g4 ♙f6 20 ♙d2! ♙xg4 21 ♙xh6! + .

b) 17...♙xd5? 18 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 19 ♙xd5 ♙f4 + 20 ♙d2 ±

18 ♙b1

Stopping any annoying checks on the c1-h6 diagonal. Now 18... ♙c7 is best

18...♙c8? 19 ♙de1 (D)



19...g6?!

This move fails tactically, as we shall see 19...b5?! is another spirited try, seeking counterplay on the queenside, where White's king is placed. This is normally a good policy when the

pawns have castled on opposite sides, but things are gloomy for Black if White continues energetically.

a) 20 ♖e2? is too slow. After 20...a5 Black is starting to have some fun on the queenside.

White has a more aggressive approach which is interesting and thematic. Can you spot it?

b) 20 ♖g5! (forwards, soldiers!) 20...hxcg5 (as the saying goes, 'the only way to refuse a sacrifice is to accept it', besides, other options leave Black clearly worse; for example, 20...f5 21 ♖e6 ±) 21 hxcg5 f5 (the only move) 22 gxf6 ♖xf6. I imagine Tiviakov was worried about this position – and it is scary.

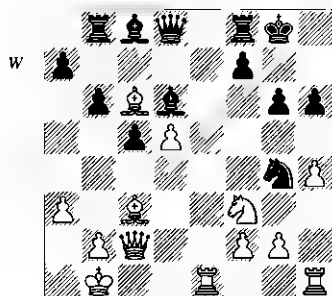
b1) 23 ♖g6? b4 24 axb4 ♖xb4! is unclear.

b2) The flashy 23 ♖h6?! puts pressure on f6 and prepares to double rooks on the h file, but after 23...b4 24 ♖xf6 (24 ♖g6? bxc3 25 ♖eh1 ♖f5+! →, 24 ♖eh1? bxc3 →) 24...♖xf6 25 ♖e8+ ♖xe8 26 ♖h7+ ♖f7 27 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 28 ♖xf6 gxf6, White should take a draw by perpetual check.

b3) The best solution, as pointed out by Zenon Franco, is 23 ♖e6!, with similar ideas as in the game continuation on move 20. After 23...♖xe6 24 dxe6, White threatens 25 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 26 ♖h7+ ♖f8 27 ♖h8+ ♖e7 28 ♖xg7+ ♖xe6 29 ♖g4+, and 24...♖h2? 25 ♖xh2 ♖d6 26 ♖h1 ♖xc6 27 ♖xf6 ♖xe6 28 ♖xg7! leads to a good ending for White.

Maybe Black should play the ugly 19...f6 not a move one would play very willingly, but there does not appear to be a way for White to smash through in that case.

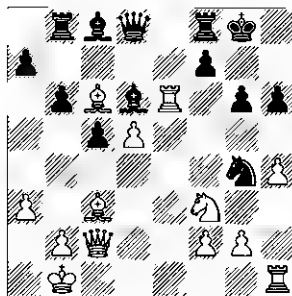
We now return to 19...g6? (D)



In principle you should never play pawn moves around your king unless there is a good reason to do so (an example of this may be to make an escape-square for your king, which is normally useful later on in the game). This is because pawn moves around your king, more often than not, make your king more susceptible to attack. The text-move is a good example of that. 19...g6?! seriously weakens the defence of the black king, which White duly punishes.

If you were White here, how could you try to punish Black on the light squares, which he has just weakened? Remember that 20...♖f5 is threatened and must be stopped.

20 ♖e6! (D)



Very nice. White aims to open Black's king up on the light squares. If Black's g-pawn were still on g7, then this move would not be possible. It only works because Black has weakened his light squares.

20...♖xe6

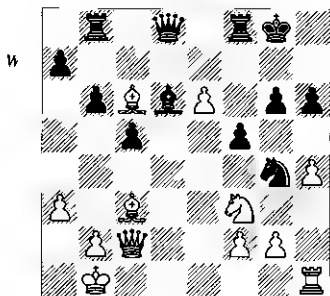
Black has to accept the gift. Other moves do not help; for example, 20...♖h7 21 h5 + ♖xe6 22 dxe6 f5 23 hxcg6+ ♖xg6 24 ♖h4+.

21 dxe6

It is worth noting just how useful White's d-pawn has been throughout the game. It now has a new role, being used like a can opener against the black king, attacking the base of Black's structure, the f7-pawn.

21...f5 (D)

After 21...♖f6, 22 h5 pries the black king open more.



White has good compensation for the exchange. Black's king is weak, whilst White has two powerful bishops and a nasty pawn on e6.

How should White increase the pressure? Look at ways that White can further weaken Black's pawns on the kingside.

22 h5!

Black is now forced to make a concession. He must either allow White's rook on h1 to enter the game, along the h-file, or else allow White's pawn to remain on h5. The main idea behind this move is to weaken the support of the f5 pawn. Without the f pawn, all lines would be opened towards the black king.

The immediate 22 e7! is also strong, when play may transpose to the next note.

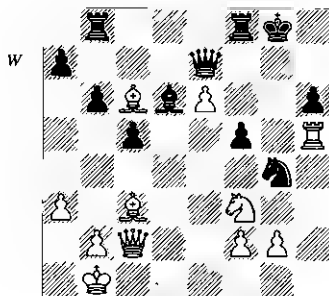
22... gxf5

22. g5 was probably the lesser of the two evils as White has the tricky task of finding the correct reply. 23 e7! (opening another diagonal

against Black's vulnerable king) 23. Qxe7 (after 23... Qxe7 24 Qd5+ Qh7 25 Qe1 Qd8 26 Qe6! + Black's f5-square drops and so does the game) 24 Qd1 (all of White's moves are natural, he develops pieces with tempo) 24... Qc7 25 Qd5+ Qh7 26 Qe6! (again the critical idea, f5 must drop) 26... Qf4 27 Qd5 +

23 Qxh5 + - Qe7 (D)

23... Qc8 24 Qxf5 Qf6 (24... Qxc6 25 Qf7! Qxf7 26 Qg6+ Qf8 27 Qxf7#) 25 Qd5! Qxc6 26 Qg6+ Qh8 27 Qxh6+ Qg8 28 Qg5#



Black's position is hopeless but White still needs to finish as accurately as possible. What would you choose to do here if you were White? I shall give you a clue: the only white piece that is not really pulling its weight is the f3-knight. Also, if the f5-pawn can be removed White's queen is left a free route to g6.

24 Qh4! Qxe6 25 Qxf5 Qe5 26 Qd5! 1-0

Game 21

Murtas Kazhgaleev – Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu

French Team Ch, Port Barcares 2005

Czech Benoni

Most games in this book are very sharp affairs with numerous tactics flaring up at all stages.

This game is a bit different. That is because things start quietly with a lot of subtle manoeuvring taking place. There are no outrageous tactics, just positional ideas with lots of minor points. These minor points gradually build up

to a big attack for Black. The game is a good example of quite sensible play leading to an advantage and then to checkmate!

White plays some slightly inaccurate moves on the way, and this helps Black achieve his aim.

You will have to excuse me for trying to explain some of the moves and ideas in the opening

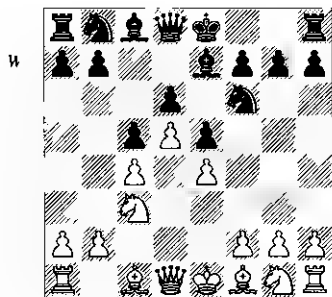
very deeply. I thought that it would make a nice change to explain what is going on in a closed position. I have also tried to explain the likely thoughts of the players

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e5

The Czech Benoni, an opening that is rarely seen at top level. The position becomes closed, and normally in closed positions it is hard to generate an attack; spectacular attacks normally require open lines. Yet as we shall see here, Black creates a devastating attack from a closed position.

The Czech Benoni is really a solid but passive opening on which there is little theory, but if White presses too hard then there are good chances to counterattack.

4 ♖c3 d6 5 e4 ♙e7 (D)



6 h3

This move has three main aims.

1) White wishes to play ♖f3 without being pinned by ...♙g4.

2) White wants to place his dark squared bishop on e3 without being hit by ...♙g4.

3) g4 now becomes an option, especially if Black commits his king to the kingside

Of course, there are other options available to White. For instance, 6 ♙d3 ♖bd7, when an other Nisipeanu game continued 7 ♖ge2 g6 (a rather strange move, but Black is thinking prophylactically; he wants to stop ♖g3 followed by ♖f5 – if White plays ♖g3 now, then ... h5 is one interesting option that Black may consider) 8 ♙h6!? (not entirely necessary but interesting nevertheless; White wants to stop Black from

castling) 8...♖g4 9 ♙d2 h5!? 10 f3 ♖gf6 11 ♙c2 h4 (Black is using his h-pawn to create weaknesses on the kingside) 12 0-0-0 ♙f8 13 g3 a6 14 f4 ♖g4 15 ♙df1 hxg3 16 hxg3 ♙g7 17 ♖d1?! b5! and Black has succeeded in creating some attacking chances on the queenside, S.Pedersen-Nisipeanu, Bundesliga 2004/5.

6...♖bd7 7 ♙e3

It may be better for White not to commit this bishop for a while, as this keeps his options open. 7 ♖f3 allows greater flexibility in White's set-up.

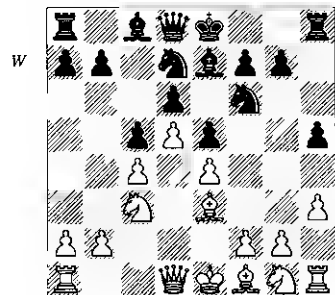
7...h5!? (D)

Black refrains from castling. In closed positions where both sides are undecided about what they should do next, it is often better to use waiting tactics, and choose a plan depending on what the opponent decides. By not committing his king, Black permits himself extra flexibility.

Also, castling can run into a nasty attack here; for example:

a) 7... 0-0 8 g4! leaves Black cramped on the kingside, whilst White can slowly build up his forces over there.

b) 7...♖f8 is similar to the text move, as Black wants with his king 8 g3 (White notices that the black knight is heading for f4, so he puts a stop to it) 8. h5 9 h4 with a solid position



8 ♙d3

This is not the best square for White's bishop. Hopefully you will understand why after the following explanation.

It is important to try to understand what Black is planning here. If White can do this he can start playing prophylactically against it. Black wishes to play the following plan:

1) ...h4 with the aim of fixing the f4-square for one of his knights

2) ...f8, ...g6, ...h5 and ...hf4; when a black knight reaches this square it applies pressure to White's kingside, especially g2 and h3

3) Often after ...h5 Black would like to exchange dark squared bishops off with ...g5, because at the moment his bishop is very bad on e7. It is a good idea for the more cramped side (Black) to swap pieces off, as this will leave him with more room to manoeuvre.

Summing up, we can see that Black's plan revolves around him playing ...h5 at some point. So if White can stop this he should have the advantage. Without playing anything crazy, can you see how White might be able to deter Black from this plan?

8 f3 is better, and after 8...h4, 9 e2! is the idea I was thinking about. From e2 the bishop indirectly controls the h5 square, making it hard for Black to play ...h5; for example, 9...f8 (9...h5 10 f4) 10 0-0 g6 11 a3 h5? (the move that 9 e2 aimed to stop) 12 ex5! (the tactical point) 12...xe5 13 exh5 xc4 14 a4+ f8 15 xc4 exh5 16 f4 and White's centre gives him a nice advantage, Poscksterner-Miltner, Luxembourg 1981.

8...h4

Black's pawn on h4 stakes out control of some important dark squares, g3 and f4 in particular. This makes it hard for White to develop any activity on the kingside.

9 f3 h5

If White's bishop were on e2, this would run into ex5!

10 e2

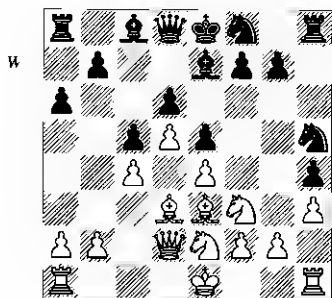
White brings his pieces over to control the f4-square.

10...f8

10...g5! also looks interesting.

11 d2 a6 (D)

Preparing play on both sides of the board. When the position is closed, as it is here, both sides have to watch out for pawn-breaks, as they will change the nature of the position.



12 0-0-0!

White is the first player to commit his king, but this is probably a mistake as now the break ...b5 is hard to stop. When Black manages to play ...b5 his attack on the queenside will take off.

12 b4 looks a lot more logical. Black has moved most of his pieces over to the kingside so starting play on the queenside is right. After 12...b6 13 b1 e White has been the first to make a pawn-break.

12...f6!

Superficially, this looks illogical as Black has just moved his knight to h5. However, the fact that White has played the committal, and in a sense weakening, 0-0-0 changes the whole landscape. Now Black's pieces are needed on different squares as a queenside break is main priority.

The text-move is mainly aimed at preventing White from achieving any pawn breaks on the kingside, especially g4. This may already have been a direct threat. Thus 12...g6 is natural looking but allows 13 g4! hxg3 14 fxg3 f6 15 g4, when White has seized the initiative on the kingside. The open f-file and advanced pawns give him attacking chances. 12...f6! stops this by keeping things closed on the kingside.

13 b1

13 g4! hxg3 14 xg3 exh3 nets Black a useful pawn.

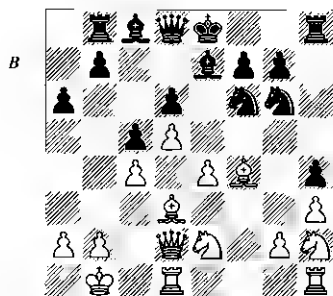
13...g6 14 h2 b8

With the simple plan of 15...b5 and opening up some lines towards White's king.

15 f4

I feel that it is necessary for White to play this move at some point. Basically White needs to generate counterplay or Black will have it all his own way on the queenside

15...exf4 16 ♖xf4 (D)

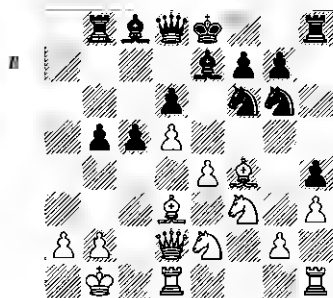


One problem with 15 f4 is that there is a massive outpost on e5 for one of Black's knights. A plan that springs to mind is 16...♞d7 followed by 17 ♗de5. But what would you do here?

16...b5!

No point mucking about - Black gets on with the real matter at hand! Black's king is in no danger, so it is more important to attack rather than shuffle pieces. Around this point in the game Black moves up a gear.

17 exb5 axb5 18 ♞f3 (D)

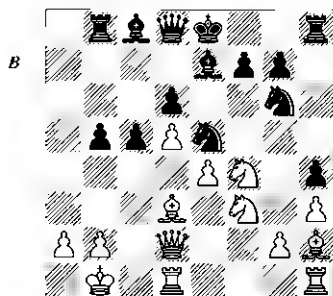


If it were White's move here, what might he play? And more importantly, how do you stop it?

18...♞d7!

White wanted to play 19 e5! with counterplay in the centre. This must be stopped, so only now, given that there is a specific reason, should Black play ...♞d7.

19 ♖h2 ♞de5 20 ♞f4 (D)

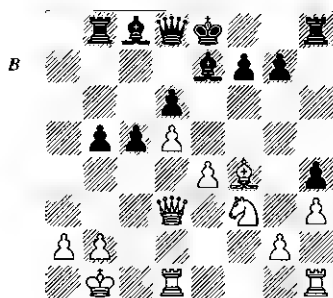


White wishes to exchange a pair of knights, as this will help him gain control over the e5-square. At the moment Black has this square well defended by his knights.

20...♞xf4

20...♞xf3 21 gxf3 ♞e5 also looks very promising.

21 ♖xf4 ♞xd3! 22 ♗xd3 (D)



Black has swapped one sort of advantage for another. This was a skill at which Fischer was especially adept

Before swapping pieces on f4 and d3, Black had control over the e5-square. Now after the

exchange he concentrates his forces against the white king. He has removed the last minor piece guarding it, the bishop on d3, so it is time to use the open a-file to deliver checkmate!

22...0-0

Nice and calm. The king's rook will be needed in the attack.

23 e5

White's only chance.

23...♖a8 24 exd6 ♜f6

The combination of bishops on open diagonals and rooks on open files can be very powerful. This is no exception.

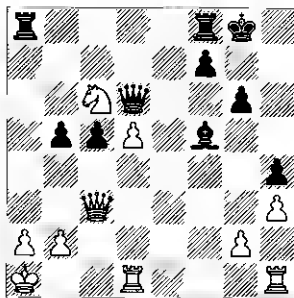
25 ♜e5 g6 26 ♖a1 ♜f5 27 ♜c3 ♜xe5 28 ♜xe5 ♜xd6 29 ♜c6 (D)

White's king is trapped in the corner. What is the blow and follow up to finish the game off?

29...♞xa2+!

No escape now.

B



30 ♜xa2 ♞a8+ 31 ♜a5

Or

a) **31 ♜a3 ♞xa3+ 32 bxa3 ♜e4 ++.**

b) **31 ♜b3 c4+ +.**

31...b4 32 ♜c1 b3+! 0-1

Game 22

Peter Svidler – Magnus Carlsen

Rapidplay match (2), Longyearbyen 2006

Sicilian Defence, ♟c3

This encounter was a strong contender for game of 2006

Svidler sees that his opponent's king is still stuck in the middle of the board on move 13, whilst his own pieces are all developed. He comes up with a thunderbolt which dramatically changes the course of the game. The main piece to watch out for is Svidler's dark-squared bishop, which divides Black's game in two. Even though Black is serious material up, the extra pieces are useless.

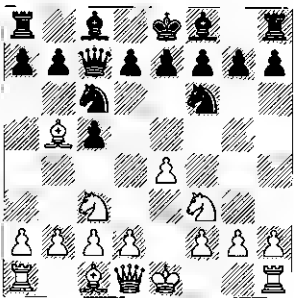
This game was from a rapidplay match, which makes White's attack even more impressive.

1 e4 c5 2 ♟f3 ♟c6 3 ♟c3 ♟f6 4 ♜b5

Svidler chooses to avoid the main lines starting with 3 d4 or 4 d4, but as this game shows, there can still be a lot of venom in the position even when White plays what looks like a quieter system. After all, simple development is rarely a mistake!

4...♜c7 (D)

W



This was played by Leko in 2003 against Anand and Kasparov, hence the popularity. Black plays this move so as to meet 5 ♜xc6 with 5...♜xc6 to avoid doubling his pawns. The queen is often quite useful on c7 as well. This is because Black's main plan in these types of positions is to play ...♟d4 and after a subsequent exchange on d4 Black has pressure on the c file.

On the downside for Black, the queen is open to attack on c7

5 0-0 Qd4

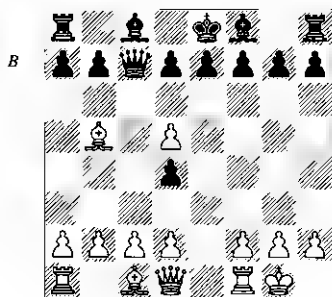
Black's usual plan, he attempts to get counterplay against White's lead in development

5...Qg4 is quite an amusing try, with the idea of following up with ..Qd4 and mate on h2! The knight though is exposed on g4 and the queen on c7 can also come under attack. White should look for ways to attack immediately. One good approach is 6 Qd5 (6 h3 is also good; I don't believe 6...h5?! but it is probably thematic!) 6 ♖b8 7 d3 Qd4 8 ♙f4 ← and Black's cheap tricks have been stopped.

6 Qxd4

Critical Other moves would lose too much time. When ahead in development, play as actively as possible!

6...cxd4 7 Qd5 Qxd5 8 exd5 (D)



As the pawn-formation has changed, it is time to take a new look at the position

White is seriously ahead in development as he has castled and his bishop is placed on a useful square. On b5 it prevents Black from moving his d-pawn, therefore making it hard for Black to develop. The e-file is also a very useful avenue to attack along

Black has to play energetically to counter this. One idea for Black is to target White's pawn on d5, though in many lines White will happily sacrifice this pawn to keep the initiative.

I would prefer White's position as it is much easier to play, whilst Black has to be constantly on guard

8...a6

It is more critical for Black to grab a pawn with 8 ♜c5 9 c4! (White aims to open up the position and wishes to keep his pawn on d5, where it cramps Black) 9. a6 (9...dxc3 10 ♖b3! was better for White in Anand-Leko, Linares 2003; White is starting to get all of his pieces into play, which is very dangerous for Black) and now White can try 10 b4!? or 10 ♙a4 with a strong initiative

9 ♙a4 g6 10 d3 h6

A prophylactic move aimed at stopping 11 ♙g5 Black would like to play 10 ...♙g7 but it runs into 11 ♙g5 ± followed by ♙e1, when White is doing well.

11 ♜f3!?

The natural 11 ♙e1 had been tried before, but as Svidler commented, "The general rule for this position says that Black is fine if he manages to play ...♙f8 and . d6, and I spotted a way to stop this."

This shows how a great player thinks. White understands the position from the opening and knows what Black needs to play in order to survive. Therefore White searches for a way to stop this, and when he finds a way he plays it.

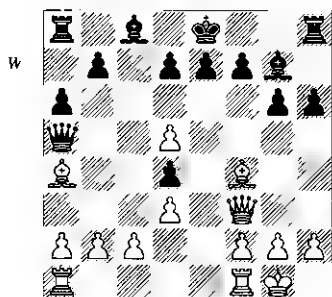
11...♙g7

Black must get his pieces out at some point!

12 ♙f4

It is worth noticing how good the bishop is on a4, stopping d6

12...♜a5 (D)



White is fully mobilized and Black's king is in the centre. Does White need to worry about

his bishop on a4? Or does he have another idea? Try to work out where Black is weakest and look for a way to exploit this.

13 ♖fe1!!

13 ♖b3 would probably leave White with a small advantage, but the move played is much stronger. White is preparing a cascade of sacrifices! You should have noticed that Black is weakest along the e-file and White should aim to attack along it as quickly as possible.

13... ♗xa4!

Black needs to take up the gauntlet as other moves leave him clearly worse; for example, 13... 0-0 14 ♖b3 e6 15 ♖d6 ±, when Black's position is in a twist. This shows an important principle. If you have the choice between defending a bad position on equal material terms or grabbing material where you might get mated but things are not entirely clear, you should grab the material as it is probably your only hope!

14 ♖xe7+!

The only way for White to continue as Black was dreaming of castling.

14... ♗xe7 15 ♖e1+ ♖d8? (D)

It seems like this is the losing move. If Black had moved his king the other way the game might have ended in a draw. 15 ♗f8 16 ♖d6+ ♖g8 17 ♖e7 (White's remaining pieces are very good, but they need to be!) 17 ♖h7! (17... f5? 18 ♗g3 g5 19 ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 20 ♗e5+ ♖g6 21 ♗xh8 leaves Black's king in dire straits, and there is no way to survive: 21 ♗xc2 22 ♗e8+ ♖h7 23 ♗f7+ ♖h8 24 ♖e5#) 18 ♗xf7 ♖g8 19 ♖e5 ♗xc2 20 ♗xg7+ (20 h4 ♗e2 21 ♗f4 d6 22 ♖xg7 ♗d1+ 23 ♖h2 ♖xg7 24 ♗f8 =) 20... ♖xg7 21 ♖xg7+ ♖h8 22 ♖xg6+ ♖h7 23 ♖g7+ ♖h8 and White has to take the draw. A queen is a queen after all!

What should White play now? Black's king needs to be kept in its cage

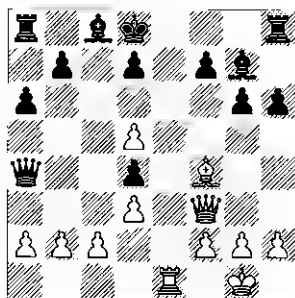
16 ♖d6!

Even though White is a rook and a bishop down, Black is in serious trouble due to White's massive bishop on d6. Black's king and most of his pieces are trapped, and there is no way to escape

16... ♗a5 17 b4 ♗b6

Black's only chance is to dislodge White's bishop from d6.

W



18 ♗f4

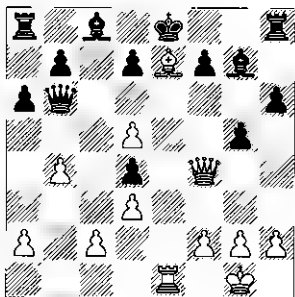
This prevents Black's king from moving to c7 after White plays ♖e7+. The black king must be kept in the middle. Black's position is very embarrassing – he can hardly move anything!

18... g5

Black would like to swap pieces off – a good tactic when defending. However, this is impossible here, for example, 18 ♖e8? 19 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 20 ♗e4+ ♖d8 21 ♗e7#

19 ♖e7+ ♖e8 (D)

W



Let's now see if you can improve upon Svidler.

Up to this point White has played a great game but his next move is a slight slip-up. The critical moves are 20 ♖c5+, 20 ♖xg5+, 20 ♖f6+ and 20 ♗e4. Try to work out what Black's best reply is to all of these moves and then decide what move you would play.

20 ♖c5+?

This move is actually an error, as White had a way to finish the game immediately

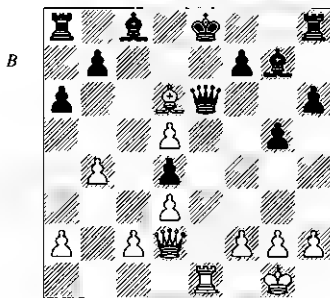
a) 20 ♖xg5+? is also wrong, as it allows Black to hide his king away on the kingside: 20... ♖f8 21 ♖e7+ ♖g8 22 ♖d6 (probably best, trying to prevent Black's queen from swinging over) 22... ♖d8 23 ♖e7 ♖xe7 24 ♖xe7 with unclear play

b) 20 ♖f6+? also allows Black to run with his king by 20... ♖f8

c) 20 ♖e4! (everything so far has to do with the e-file so let's put another piece on it!) 20... ♖g6 (I expect a lot of readers got this far and were put off by the queen exchange, as I am sure Svidler was, but White has a forced win, and a very pretty one at that!) 21 ♖c5+! and even without the queens Black is mated: 21... ♖xe4 22 ♖xe4+ ♖d8 23 ♖b6#.

20... ♖e6 21 ♖d2 d6!

The only chance. 21. ♖e5 22 ♖xe5+ ♖xe5 23 ♖e2 f6 24 ♖h5+ ♖d8 25 d6! (the threat is 26 ♖b6#) 25... ♖xd6 26 ♖xd6 ♖e8 27 h4 ♖e6 28 ♖xb6! ♖xd6 29 ♖f8+ ♖c7 30 h5 + here comes Harry the h pawn!

22 ♖xd6 (D)**22... ♖d7?**

22... ♖f8! would have left matters far from clear; for example, after 23 dxe6 (23 ♖c5 ♖xc5

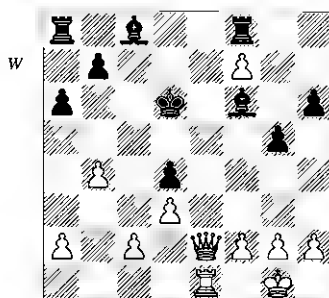
24 dxe6 ♖d6) 23 ♖xd6 24 exf7+ ♖xf7 Black has got over the worst and is fine.

23 dxe6+ ♖xd6 24 exf7 ±

The pawn on f7 is a major thorn in Black's side and White is far too well coordinated for Black to have any chance of surviving. White just needs to sneak his queen into Black's position and it will be game over.

24... ♖f8

The pawn needs to go! 24... ♖e6 25 ♖e2 ♖xf7 26 ♖e7+ +-.

25 ♖e2 ♖f6 (D)

White's next move is my favourite one of the game. To understand it you have to work out what Black's plan is. It is obvious he wants to play 26... ♖xf7, when 27 ♖e8 ♖e7 28 ♖f8 ♖d7 29 ♖xf6?? runs into 29... ♖xe1#. So if White can stop this, maybe by defending his rook, he will win a piece. It should be easy to find now.

26 ♖f1!

Svidler describes this move as 'very Dvoretsky-esque'! Actually, 26 c4! dxc3 27 ♖e3! + was also good

26... ♖c7 27 ♖h5

And the queen re-enters the attack with a vengeance!

27... ♖f5 28 ♖f3 ♖xf7 29 ♖xf5 +- ♖af8 30 f3 ♖g7 31 ♖c5+ 1-0

6 All-In!

I was going to call this the 'the mad, bad and dangerous' chapter! As you will see, the games in this chapter are rather nuts, which is one reason why I found them so much fun

The ex-world champion Emanuel Lasker once said, "Vanity should never tempt a player to engage in a combat at the risk of loss of health. It is bad enough to lose without the additional annoyance of paying doctors' bills"

This is a light-hearted way of looking at chess and the comment was probably made half in jest and half in truth. Many chess-players do cause themselves serious harm by becoming too nervous, as I have seen first-hand. Be warned that the games in this chapter could damage your health but that's nothing – just imagine what the players must have been going through!

Game 23

Simon Williams – Zhao Zong

World Junior Ch, Erevan 1999

Bird Opening

I have rather selfishly chosen this game because it gave me a lot of enjoyment at the time. I was having a bad tournament and I needed a win to put things back on track. It was probably due to the bad tournament situation that I played so recklessly.

My idea was simply to checkmate my opponent – after all that is what chess is all about.

This came at a cost of a rook and a pawn, but while Black was capturing these pieces I had time to build up a strong attack. The attack was not sound but it was difficult to face over the board and a lot of fun to play!

There are many crazy variations here. I have included some of them for the reader's amusement, but to analyse everything would probably leave me – and I expect you – with a nasty headache!

1 f4

A rather lazy move, but I have always played the Dutch with Black and I felt like giving it a go with White. I wouldn't recommend this as a good way to improve your game. If you want to get better, stick to main lines – there is a reason why they're main lines!

One thing you should take note of though is this pawn – just watch it fly

1...d5 2 ♟f3 g6

This is a sensible approach from Black, as it deters b3. b2 would be a useful square for White to place his bishop.

3 e3 ♟g7 4 ♟e2 c5 5 0-0 ♟c6 6 d3 ♟f6 7 a4 0-0 8 ♟h1 (D)

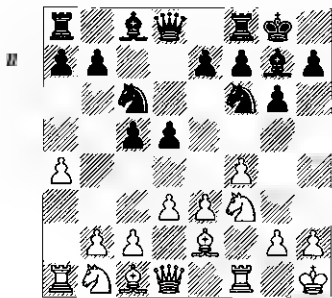
This reaches a Classical Dutch line that I played for many years with Black (and still do!) but with one main difference: the white king is on h1. This is a useful improvement but not a move that gives White any advantage. More sensible would have been 8 ♟e5, making a claim for the centre.

8...♟c7

8...b6 is the choice of most players when the colours are reversed. One main line after this is 9 ♟e5 ♟b7 10 ♟xc6 ♟xc6 11 ♟e1 ♟c7 12 ♟d2 e5 13 f5! with an unclear position. If you want to know more, buy my book *Play the Classical Dutch* (good bit of book promotion thrown in there!)

9 ♟c3

b5 is a useful outpost for the white knight.



9...a6

9. e5?! allows 10 e4!, when White has the better chances

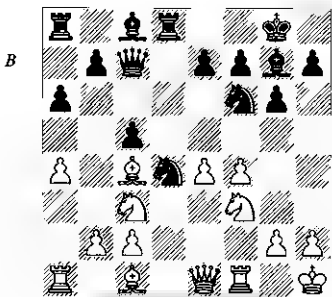
10 e4

White's main plan in this position, he grabs the centre and gives himself attacking opportunities on the kingside

10...dxe4 11 dxe4 ♖d8 12 ♕e1

h4 is the correct square for the white queen anyway

12...♗d4 13 ♖e4?! (D)



Objectively, '?!' is probably more accurate. I was not in the mood for counting material. I just wanted to place my pieces on their best squares, get on with the attack and hope for the best!

The bishop after all is well placed here, attacking f7. f5 will follow, when White's remaining piece, the c1-bishop, will enter the game, so all of White's pieces will be attacking

On the downside, the material cost will be high.

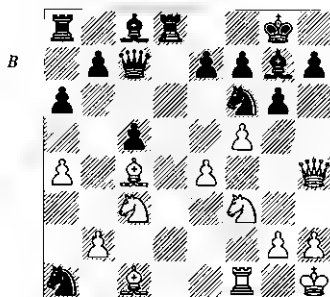
13...♗xc2 14 ♕h4 ♗xa1?!

This is still OK, but Black could have stopped all the fun with 14...♗d4!. This is a safer option, returning some material immediately to soak up White's initiative. It is hard to see what White can do after this, for example:

a) 15 ♗xd4 cxd4 +

b) 15 ♖xf7+ ♗xf7 16 ♗g5+ ♗g8 17 e5 (17 ♗d5 ♖xd5 +) 17...h6 18 exf6 exf6 +

c) 15 ♗e5 ♖xc4 16 ♗xc4 ♗xa1 -+ 15 f5 (D)



The position I was aiming for. White has many ways to continue the attack. Some ideas are ♖h6, ♗g5, e5, ♖f4 with ♖xa1 (only the exchange down then!), ♖xf7+, etc.

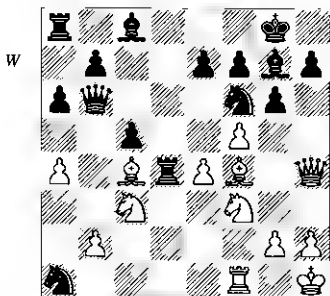
Fritz gives this position as a healthy 3½ pawns up for Black, but care is needed. Probably the best way to defend against such an attack is to play actively and counter-attack. Black could and probably should return some material to get the initiative back

15...b5

The idea behind this move is to divert White's pieces away from kingside and over to the queenside. At least Black does not have his king there!

15...♗d4 looks like a logical counterattack yet it still seems that White has enough resources to retain the balance, for example, 16 ♖f4 ♕b6 (D).

Now get ready for some long lines! White has two options



a) 17 fxg6?! causes mass-confusion if Black joins in the fun.

a1) 17 ♖xc4 18 ♜d5 ♜xb2 (18 ♜xd5? 19 ♜xh7+ ♜f8 20 ♜h6 ♜e8 21 gxf7+ ♜d7 22 ♜xg7+ shows how careful Black has to be) 19 ♜xf6+ (19 ♜e5 ♜c1 20 ♜xf6+ exf6 21 ♜xh7+ ♜f8 22 ♜d6+ ♜e8 23 gxf7+ ♜xf7 24 ♜h5+ ♜g8 25 ♜e8+ ♜h7 26 ♜h5+ with a draw by perpetual check) 19 ♜xf6 20 ♜xh7+ ♜f8 21 gxf7 with enough compensation; e.g., 21. ♜xf7 22 ♜g5+ ♜e8? 23 ♜g8+ ♜f8 24 ♜xc4.

a2) 17 ..hxg6! is the spoiler and Black's simplest choice. 18 ♜xd4 cxd4 19 e5 dxc3 20 exf6 exf6 -. The problem that White has in many of these lines is that he just does not have enough pieces!

b) 17 ♜xd4! cxd4 18 ♜d5 ♜xd5 (18. ♜c5 19 ♜xa1 ♜xc4 20 ♜c1 is unclear) 19 ♜xd5 and now Black has to tread carefully. The assessment of the position depends on whether White has enough pieces left on the board to shove towards Black's king 19 ..e6! (19. ♜c2? 20 ♜xe7 [danger, danger!] 20... ♜xf5! 21 ♜xf7+ ♜h8 22 exf5 +) 20 ♜e7 ♜d7! (20... exd5 21 ♜e8+ ♜f8 22 ♜h6 ♜d7 23 ♜xa8 ♜c5 24 ♜xa1 ±) 21 fxe6 ♜xe6 22 ♜c7! (the game is heading towards a draw .. had you not seen that from the start?) 22... ♜xb2 23 ♜xe6 fxe6 24 ♜e5! ♜xe5 25 ♜xe6+ ♜h8 (25 .. ♜g7 26 ♜e7+ ♜h6 27 ♜h4+ ♜g7 28 ♜e7+ ♜g8 29 ♜e6+) 26 ♜xe5+ ♜g8 27 ♜e6+ ♜h8 28 ♜e5+ -

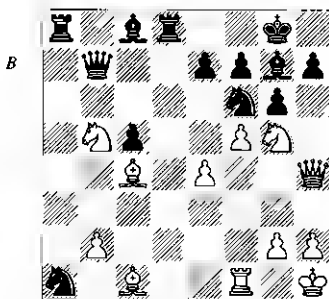
16 axb5 axb5 17 ♜xb5 ♜b7

The position is a mess, a very difficult mess to assess. I would rather be White here as his moves are much more natural to play.

When you are so much material down you have to keep attacking and play as actively as possible. If Black is given a chance he will be able to consolidate his king's position.

18 ♜g5 (D)

The only way is forwards. This move attacks two of Black's most vulnerable squares, f7 and h7



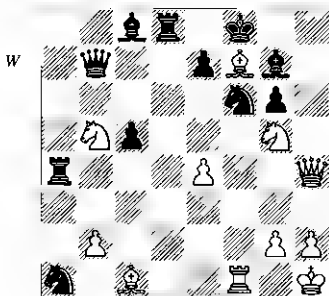
18...e6

18 ..♖a4! is a good defensive idea. The rook attacks a piece and defends along the 4th rank, where White's queen is placed. White has two options:

a) 19 fxg6 h6! (19.. hxg6 20 ♜xf7+ ♜f8 21 ♜h7!! ±; see line 'b1' below) 20 ♜xf7+ ♜h8 is unclear (and not 20.. ♜f8? 21 ♜h7+ ♜xh7 22 gxf7 +).

b) 19 ♜xf7+ and now:

b1) 19 .. ♜f8? allows a beautiful idea 20 fxg6 hxg6 (D)



The rook on f1 indirectly attacks Black's king. There is a stunning move that keeps White in the fight 21 ♖h7! ♔f5! (only move; 21. ♖xb5? 22 ♗g8+! ♔xg8 23 ♔h7#) 22 ♔e6+ ♔xf7 (22...♔xc6? 23 ♔xe6 ♔e8 {or 23. ♖xb5 24 ♗g8#} 24 ♗xg6+ ♔f8 25 ♖f7#) 23 ♔xd8+ ♔f8 24 exf5 ♔xh7 25 fxg6+ ♔f6 26 ♔xb7+ and somehow White is better!

b2) 19 ♖h8 20 ♔c3 with unclear play

With his last move (18. e6), Black is trying to block out White's threats against f7. Should White therefore turn his attention elsewhere?

19 ♔xh7?

White decides to target h7, but misses a clear win by 19 e5! ♔h5 20 ♔xf7!, when Black's defences collapse totally

19...♔xh7?

Black can keep things relatively unclear with 19...♔h5 20 ♖xd8+ ♔xh7 21 ♔d6 ♖d7 (please swap queens!) 22 fxg6+ fxg6 23 ♖b6 (no thank you)

20 ♖xd8+ ♔f8

20 ♔f8 21 fxg6 fxg6 22 ♔c7 is also much better for White

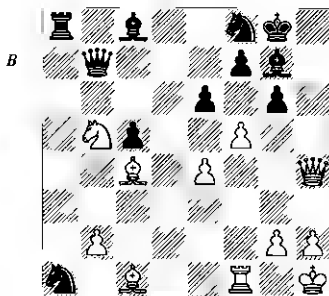
21 ♖h4? (D)

I am not sure why I played this, as going backwards cannot be correct!

Better was 21 f6 ♔h8 (21 ♖d7 22 ♖xd7 ♔xd7 23 fxg7 ♔xg7 24 ♔d6 f6 25 e5! f5 26 ♔e3 +-) 22 ♔d6 ♖d7 23 ♖e7! +

21...f6?

21 ♔e5! ♔ is much better. The bishop takes up a dominant central location from where it can control the d6-square and stop any f6 threats. 22 ♔h6 is met by 22. exf5 (and not 22 ♔d7? 23 ♔d6! ♖xb2 {23 ♔xd6? 24 ♖f6 +-} 24



♔xf8 ♔xf8 25 fxg6 fxg6 26 ♔xf8+ ♔xf8 27 ♖d8+ ♔g7 28 ♖xd7+ ±)

The text move is disastrous for Black. The light squares e6 and g6 become too weak. White still needs a way to break through though; any ideas?

22 e5!

Opening up more lines, and this time things are fatal for Black.

22...g5

Or.

a) 22 fxe5 23 f6 + .

b) 22 gxf5 23 exf6!.

23 ♖g4 ♖e7 24 ♔xg5

Other moves are also strong but it is fitting that White's f-pawn has the moment of fame.

24...fxg5 25 f6 ♖f7 26 ♔d3

26 ♔d6 + is also winning.

26...♔xf6 27 exf6 ♔h7 28 ♔d6 ♖d7 29 f7+

Freddie the f-pawn finishes his journey, and it's time for a well-deserved rest!

29...♔f8 30 ♔xh7 1-0

Game 24

Kiril Georgiev – Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu

European Clubs Cup, Fügen 2006

Blumenfeld Gambit

In this game Black chooses a sharp opening in the hope of unsettling his opponent. This opening is followed up by an outrageous attack. This is a particularly good strategy against a player such as Kiril Georgiev. Kiril is a brilliant

technical player and with Black the only realistic chance a player has of winning against him is by creating a mess on the board.

This is an example of playing the opponent. It is important, especially at top level, to

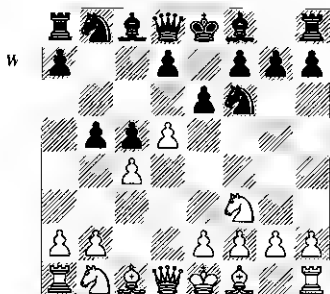
understand the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent and to play against them.

1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♖f3 e6 3 e4 c5

Lines based around ... c5 against 1 d4 tend to lead to sharp tactical situations

Take for example the three following openings which involve ... c5 early on the Benko, Benoni and the Blumenfeld Gambit, which is Black's choice here. In each of these openings Black gains space on the queenside whilst White has to act actively in the centre

4 d5 b5!?! (D)



The Blumenfeld Gambit Black aggressively thrusts away on the queenside, hoping to unsettle White in the centre. This choice seems to be becoming more popular at top level recently. It certainly has good surprise value

5 dxe6 fxe6 6 cxb5 d5

Black has sufficient compensation for his sacrificed pawn. Black has taken control of the centre and the f-file is also a useful avenue for attack.

7 g3 a6

In Benko spirit!

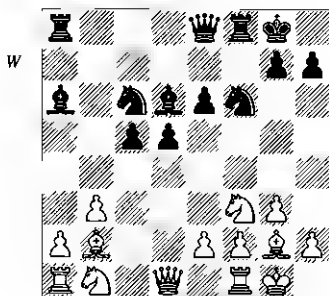
8 bxa6 ♗d6

Black does not have to rush capturing back on a6. It is better to wait and see how White positions his pieces and only then to decide what to take back on a6 with.

9 ♗g2 0-0 10 0-0 ♗c6 11 b3 ♗xa6 12 ♗b2 ♖e8 (D)

Time to take stock

Black certainly has good compensation for the sacrificed pawn. He has an impressive

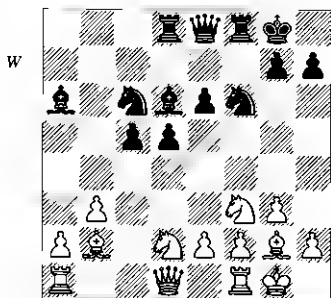


pawn-centre, all his pieces are active and he has chances of a kingside attack

The black queen is slowly moving over to the kingside where it will increase the pressure on White's king. This policy is used in many aggressive openings, such as the Dutch and Grand Prix Attack, and is worth bearing in mind.

White on the other hand wishes to consolidate his pawn advantage and neutralize Black's initiative. It would be ideal for White to control the e5-square, which would block out Black's pieces, but this seems to be difficult to achieve

13 ♗bd2 ♗d8 (D)

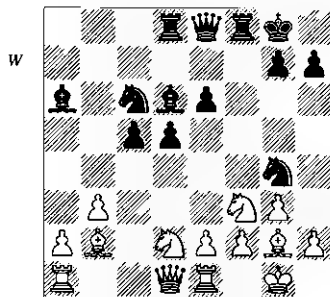


A good prophylactic move. White would love to play e4, breaking up Black's pawn centre but now things are made a lot more difficult.

Black's rook on d8 is lined up against White's queen on d1. These 'x ray' moves are often very useful. After all, in most games of chess

the position will open up at some point and if your rook is suddenly unleashed, it can become very useful indeed

14 ♖e1 ♖g4!? (D)

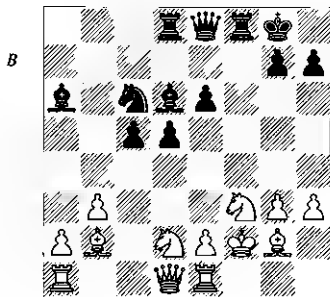


A very imaginative idea. Black realizes that the knight is going to be lost but he also understands that he will obtain a great deal of pressure in return for it.

15 h3

This move is provocative as it seriously weakens g3. ...♖xf2 is obviously Black's plan, trying to cash in on White's weakened dark squares, but what is the best way to follow up the attack after ♖xf2?

15...♖xf2 16 ♖xf2 (D)



So Black has taken on f2, forcing White's king to go for a walk. The main weaknesses for Black to target are the g3-square and the dark squares around the white king in general.

16...♖d4!?

There are two main ideas behind Black's move here. He wants either to induce 17 ♖xd4, when White has lost control of more dark squares, or to continue 17 ♖f5, moving another piece in to attack the white kingside, and especially the weak g3-square

17 g4

Stopping 17...♖f5, but 17 ♖f1, giving extra support to the dark squares around White's king, seems to be a much sterner test of Black's hack attack

17...h5!?

An interesting plan! Black slowly chips away at the cover around White's king. Black is in no rush to crash through

18 g5

White's best option is to try to keep the kingside closed

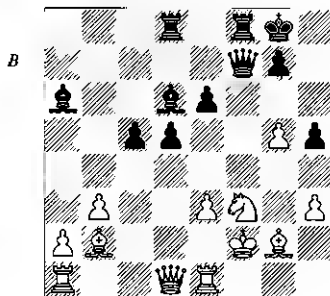
18...♖f7

Aiming for f4 and an invasion on g3 or h2

19 e3?!

Obvious but not best. White should run his king home by 19 ♖g1 ♖f4 20 ♖xd4 cxd4 21 ♖f1 e5! with unclear play.

19...♖xf3 20 ♖xf3 (D)



White would love to play 21 ♖g1, when his king has reached safety. This must be stopped at all costs. Again this is another example of 'attacking prophylaxis'. Black must think about White's best defensive plan and put a stop to it

20...♖h2!

Pretty much forced as it is the only way in which Black can keep the initiative going.

21 ♖f1?

How should Black continue his surge against White's king? Here are a couple of tips to help you along the way. White is especially weak on the dark squares, g3 in particular. Also the queen needs to enter the attack. Without a queen involved, an attack is rarely going to succeed.

A much better defence was 21 ♖f6!, trying to swap some pieces off using tactical means. Black still has some pressure after 21 ♜c7 22 ♙xh2 ♜xh2 23 ♜xh5 ♜xf6+!? (not 23...gxf6? 24 ♜g6+ ♙h8 25 gxf6 +), when the position can be described as a mess.

21 ♜h1?! is not as good as it runs into 21...d4!, threatening 22...dxe3+ and opening up the a8-h1 diagonal.

21...♜c7!

Correct! The bishop on a6 proves to be irrelevant. It costs Black time to move it.

22 ♖xa6 ♜g3+ 23 ♖e2 ♜g2+ 24 ♙d3 (D)

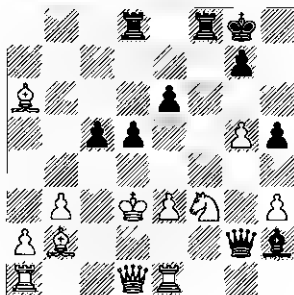
How should Black continue?

24...c4+!

Black must try to open up the position as much as possible as White's king will become more exposed to an attack. This move is especially good as it is a check, so White must react.

25 ♙c3 ♜xf3 26 ♜d4

B



Trying to block the powerful queen's route along the 2nd rank is also bad; for example, 26 ♜e2 ♜xe3+! 27 ♙d2 (27 ♜xe3 d4+ 28 ♙b4 ♙d6+! 29 ♙xc4 dxe3 +) 27. ♜xg5! 28 ♜xe3 d4 +.

26...♜f2 27 ♜b6

27 ♙a3 ♜b8 (cutting off White's king) 28 ♜e1 ♜xg5 --.

27...♙e5+ 28 ♙b4 ♜b8 --

The rest is easy

29 ♙b7 ♙xb2 30 ♜xe6+ ♙h8 31 ♙c5 ♙xa1 32 ♙xd5 ♜xg5 33 ♜xa1 c3 34 h4 ♜xh4 35 e4 c2 36 ♙c1 ♜g5 37 ♜h3 ♜xc1 0-1

Game 25**Emil Sutovsky – Valery Filippov**

Aeroflot Open, Moscow 2005

Sicilian Defence, Rossolimo

Sutovsky starts this game very logically by putting all his pieces on their best squares. He then launches a dubious attack in the hope of unsettling his opponent. This tactic works perfectly and Black does not find the correct defence, cracking under the pressure and allowing the attack to break through.

What I like about this game is the relaxed way in which White builds his attack up. Being a rook down, many players would panic and try to find an immediate win, but White takes his time. This works because Black's pieces lack any coordination and it is very hard for him to find any plan of defence.

There is a lesson here: when attacking, you must always search for your opponent's best defensive ideas, don't just concentrate on your own plans as you will miss some good resources.

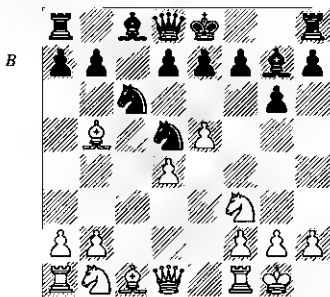
1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5

3 d4 is obviously the main line, but sharp crazy positions can be reached from even the quietest of openings.

3...g6 4 e3 ♘f6

Of course there are other lines Black can play, for example, 4. ♙g7 5 d4 cxd4 6 cxd4 ♜b6 7 ♘c3 ♘xd4 8 ♙d5 is one amusing variation.

5 e5 ♖d5 6 0-0 ♗g7 7 d4 cxd4 8 exd4 (D)



White has a very pleasant centre, which reduces the scope of Black's bishops. The g7 bishop is staring at e5 whilst Black's light-squared bishop needs to find a good square.

A big centre is often a very useful platform to build an attack from. It is easier to manoeuvre behind a centre and the centre can also be used in the attack; the e5-pawn is a typical example of this.

8...0-0 9 ♖c3 ♖xc3

Strengthening White's pawn-structure in the middle. The other option was 9.. ♖c7

10 bxc3 d6

Black cannot do without this move, which exchanges the cramping e5-pawn. If your opponent has built up a strong centre you should always look at ways to break it down. 9 times out of 10 this will involve a pawn-break. So keep your eyes open for those pawn moves!

See Korotylev-Kharlov (Game 18, Chapter 4) for a good example of Black needing to break out.

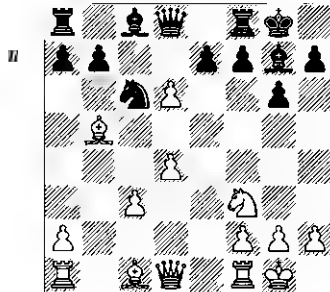
11 exd6 (D)

White can also try to hold his pawn on e5 with 11 ♖e1, when 11... ♗g4 looks like the best way to take aim at White's centre. e5 may be more of a weakness than a positive.

11...exd6?!

I am not sure about this move. These are my reasons:

1) The d6-pawn is now always a potential target to attack for White as it cannot be defended by any other pawns.



2) 11... ♗xd6 gives Black chances to play against White's mini pawn-formation on c3 and d4.

3) After 11... ♗xd6 Black has chances to form a blockade on the light squares c4 and d5, whereas after the pawn capture it seems to me that it is hard for Black to find any adequate plan.

On the other hand, White may be thinking along the following lines:

1) Exchange dark-squared bishops, which will weaken Black's king.

2) Control the e file.

Thus the natural move is 11... ♗xd6, when the game might continue 12 ♖e1 a6 13 ♗xc6 ♗xc6! 14 ♖xe7 ♗xc3 – Nevednichy-Smetanin, Avon 2002.

12 ♗g5

The last white piece enters the game with tempo. There are some other options:

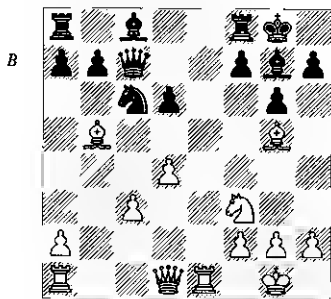
a) 12 ♖e1 ♗a5 13 ♗a4! and now 13... ♗g4 (not 13... ♗xc3? 14 ♗d2 ♗b2 15 ♗ab1 +) is an annoying move for White as he really doesn't want his kingside pawns to become doubled, Krayz Golod, Givatayim 1998.

b) Immediately putting pressure on d6 by 12 ♗f4 looks like a good option – at least it ties the black queen down to the defence of the d pawn.

12... ♗c7

12... ♗a5 is more active but White's position is preferable after the simple 13 ♗a4 (13 ♗xc6? 1 bxc6 14 ♗e7 ♗e8 15 ♗xd6 ♗xc3 =) 13... ♗xa4 14 ♗xa4 ±. White has open b- and e files to attack on, and his pieces are also slightly better placed.

13 ♖e1 (D)



Put your pieces on their best squares!

13...h6 14 ♙f4

The difference between this and White playing 12 ♙f4 is that Black has committed himself to playing... h6. This may turn out to be an extra weakness on the kingside.

On the flipside though, it may also be a strength, as any plan with ♖d2 and ♙h6 swapping the dark-squared bishops is hard to achieve, as ♖d2 can be met by... ♙h7.

In general, however, it is better not to move the pawns in front of your king too much as this will make your king's position more exposed.

14...♙e7

The knight had very few options on c6, but now it can transfer itself to a better square. The central location d5 stands out.

15 ♖b3

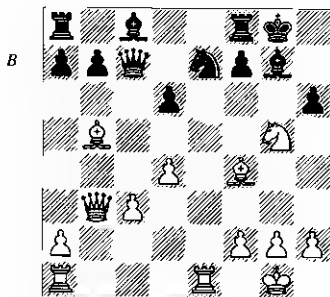
The queen stands well here as it performs a couple of roles. The c3 pawn is defended, and White exerts pressure along two lines, the a2-g8 diagonal and the b file. Also, later on the queen may wish to move to a3 or b4, where it attacks d6.

15...g5

Black tries to gain space on the kingside. If White has to remove his bishop from the h2-b8 diagonal, Black will have relieved a great amount of pressure. White has other things in mind...

16 ♙xg5?! (D)

An 'all-in' move! White reasons that if he has to move his bishop back then his advantage



would be lost, so he takes a gamble and sacrifices material.

This is a tactic that I have seen strong players use before. In some positions if a strong player can feel his advantage slipping away, he will start searching the position extra hard in hope of finding a way to complicate matters, hoping that he will handle the following tactics better than his opponent. This is a risky approach as many half-points can be lost this way, but sometimes they can be won as well!

16...hxg5?

Black, probably shocked by White's last move, goes wrong straight away. You could say that White gets lucky, but in most cases a good player is always lucky...

There is a lesson to be learnt here. When faced with an unexpected move, don't panic, take a deep breath and reassess the position. In other words, try to look at the position afresh as you will see new possibilities. Keep your cool! It is shocking to see here how a strong 2600 player just falls apart.

16...♙g6! would have raised serious questions about White's sacrifice. It is natural for Black to bring another piece over to the kingside, in order to give the king extra protection. White can try the following:

a) 17 ♙e3 hxg5 18 ♙xg5 ♖a5 +.

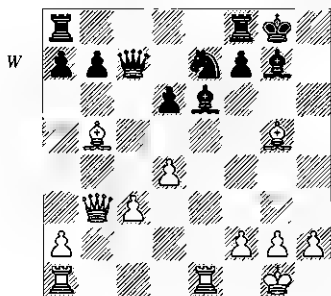
b) 17 ♙xd6 ♖xd6 18 ♙xf7 ♖xf7 19 ♖e8+ ♙f8 20 ♙c4 ♖f4 -. This shows a problem that many manic chess-players have: there are not enough pieces left on the board!

c) 17 ♙xf7 ♙xf4! (17...♙xf7? 18 ♖e8+ ♙f8 19 ♙xh6 +) 18 ♙xd6+ ♙h8 19 ♙e8 ♖d8

20 ♖xg7 ♜g5! ♠. Black has all the attacking chances.

17 ♖xg5 ♙e6? (D)

After 17. ♖f5 18 ♖d3 ♜a5 White has some pressure but Black's position is solid.



The text move is another poor defensive choice that plays into Sutovsky's hands.

Now imagine that you are White here, what is the first critical move that you should analyse?

18 ♖xe6!

Of course! Forcing moves should be analysed first. This move demolishes Black's king side and advances White's initiative. All of White's remaining pieces are active so there is no reason why this move shouldn't work.

It is nearly impossible to analyse all lines to the end here. This is the kind of position where you need to follow your instinct.

18...fxe6 19 ♜xe6+ ♜f7

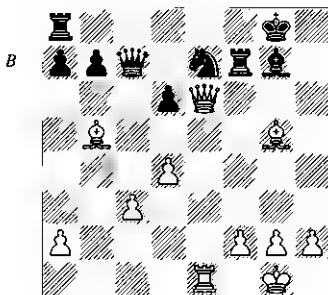
After 19...♖h8 20 ♖xe7 ♜xc3 21 ♜d1 ♜c2 22 ♜h3+ ♖g8 23 ♜f1 White has an overpowering amount of pawns for the exchange but more importantly Black's king remains very weak, especially on the light squares.

20...♙e1 (D)

Black is in a great deal of trouble due to his lack of coordination. He is pinned down whilst White dominates the board. In such positions White has time for the slow approach, and so he brings his last piece into the game.

20...a6?

It is crazy to allow White's bishop to reach b3. On b3 it is cemented to a good square and Black will never be able to exchange it.



20. ♖c6 is a better option but Black will still find it hard to organize his pieces. 21 ♖c4 (White has a strong position due to his presence on the light squares) 21... ♜f8 and now:

a) 22 ♜g6? is unconvincing as it allows Black the tactical shot 22... ♖e5! the big difference between this and the game is the positioning of White's light-squared bishop. In the actual game it is on b3, whereas here it is open to attack on c4. After 23 ♖xf7+ ♜xf7 24 ♜xf7+ ♖f7 Black has escaped the worst, and his pieces are now free to move.

b) 22 ♖f4! (White has time to play a slow move) 22. ♖a5 (after 22. ♖d8 23 ♜d5 + Black's pieces can hardly move: 23 ♖h7? 24 ♖xd6 +- or 23 ♖c6? 24 ♜xc6 ♖xc6 25 ♖xd6 +) 23 ♖d5 ♜xc3 (greedy, but Black must try something) 24 ♖xd6 ♜xd4 25 ♜f1 ♜f6 26 ♖xf8 ♜xe6 27 ♖xe6 ♖xf8 28 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 +

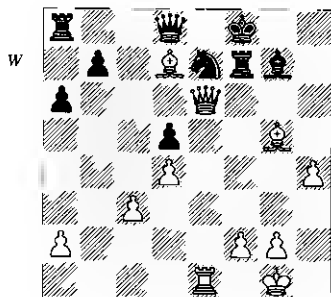
21 ♖a4 ♖c6

Trying to escape the pin by 21. ♖f8 is bad. 22 ♖d7 (another move aimed at disturbing the harmony of Black's pieces, 22 ♖d1? is also interesting, with a total change of direction: 22... ♖c6 23 ♖h5 ♖g8 24 ♖f4 +) 22... ♜d8 and now:

a) 23 ♜g4 ♖f6 24 ♖e6 ♖xg5 25 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 26 ♜xg5 ♜d7 27 ♜h5+ ♖g8 28 ♖e3! +-. This typical attacking manoeuvre is too much for Black.

b) 23 b4, getting on with the job in hand, also looks very logical and strong, and it is very hard to find a plan for Black. For example, 23...d5 (D) has the idea of moving the a8-rook

to the 6th rank, where it can defend against White's advancing h-pawn.



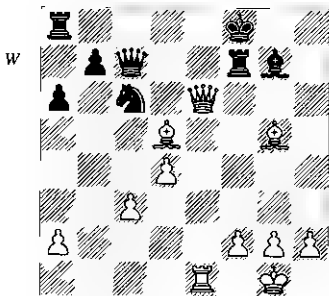
However, White has a number of ways to win here. At first I thought 24 ♖e5 was necessary, with lines such as 24...♙xe5 25 dxe5 ♖g8 26 ♖g4! ♙b6 (26...♙g7 27 ♙e6+ ♖f8 28 ♙h6 +-) 27 ♙xe7+ ♖h8 (27 ♙g7 28 ♙e6+ +-) 28 ♙h5+ ♙h7 29 ♙g5 +-. However, 24 ♖e5 carries no particular threat, and more methodical lines such as 24 h5 a5 25 h6 or 24 ♖e3 a5 25 ♙b5 win easily enough.

22 ♙b3 +- d5

22 ♖af8 23 ♙g6 +-, the b3-bishop is a monster of a piece.

23 ♙xd5 ♖f8 (D)

After 23 ♖af8 24 ♙g6 Black is powerless to escape; for example, 24...♙a5 25 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 26 ♖e8+ ♖f8 27 ♙h6 ♙c7 28 ♙xf8+ ♙xf8 29 ♙h7! +-.



It is time to take another look at the position and to try to find a plan for White. To do this, consider if Black has any good defensive moves. If not, think of ways to increase the pressure, and remember there is no reason to rush.

24 ♙g6!

A good move, after which Black is paralysed. White moves his queen to a more dynamic position but more importantly this move is aimed against 24...♙d7, by which Black hoped to relieve some pressure with a queen exchange. As White is attacking, it is beneficial for him to keep the queens on the board. Also, on g6 the queen has options of moving to h7, closing in on the black king.

White's other options are not quite as convincing. For example, 24 h4 is a good plan, since if White's pawn can reach h6 Black's position will crack. However, after 24...♙d7!, even though Black's position is still very difficult, it is now a lot less stressful for him, as he doesn't have to worry about White's queen any more. After 25 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 26 ♙xf7 ♙xf7 Black is free to move his pieces, unlike in the game. The ending is still tricky but there are some chances to survive.

24...♙e8

In general, the defender should always try to exchange pieces as this makes defence easier, so this move is logical, but Black does have other options:

a) 24...♙d7 25 ♙b3 (what does Black do next?) 25...♙a5 26 ♙f5+ +-. Just look at how powerful White's light-squared bishop is on b3.

b) 24...♙d7 is the move that White's previous move was aimed against. 25 ♙e6 is the response, keeping the queens on the board and therefore more pressure on Black. 25...♙c7 26 ♙h7 +.

25 ♙xe8+ ♙xe8 26 h4!

Another unit joins the attack, and White's king is also given an escape-square, h2.

26...♙f8 27 h5 +-.

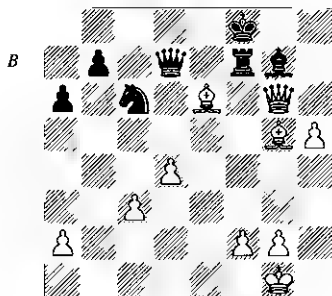
Things are now pretty straightforward.

27...♙d7

After 27...♙d7 28 ♙e6 and 29 h6 this pawn is difficult to stop.

28 ♙e6 (D)

28...♙e5



28. ♖c7 29. h6 ♗h8 leaves White in total control of the light squares but his dark-squared bishop is not fulfilling its potential, so what should White play? 30. ♗c1+ (re routing to a better diagonal) 30... ♜e8 31. h7 ♗xd4 32. ♗xf7+ ♜xf7 33. ♜g8+.

29 dxe5

White has a material advantage as well as the attack. Black could have resigned here but preferred more torture.

29... ♜d1+ 30. ♜h2 ♗xe5+ 31. f4!

A bit of care is still needed. Only relax when your opponent has shaken your hand 31. ♜h3?? is not the way to go due to 31. ♜h1+ 32. ♜g4 ♜xg2+ 33. ♜h4 ♜xf2+ 34. ♜g4 ♜g3#, which would have been an unjust finish.

31... ♗xf4+ 32. ♗xf4 ♜xf4

Black's checks have run out. Now it's White's turn.

33. ♜h6+ ♜e7 34. ♜xf4 ♜xe6 35. ♜e4+

Wherever Black moves his king, White is able to swap queens on d4 or f3, with a simple win.

35... ♜d6

35... ♜f7 36. ♜f3+!

36. ♜d4+! ♜xd4 37. cxd4 ♜e7 38. d5 1-0

Game 26

Peter Wells – Yoshiharu Habu

Hoogeveen 2005

Queen's Gambit, Semi-Slav

In this game, Black is the undisputed World Champion of Shogi!

Or Japanese chess, for those people out there who think Shogi is a form of martial art.

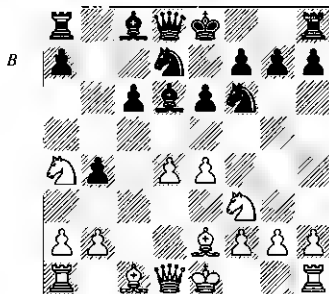
After looking at the game, you could easily be mistaken into thinking that a chess world champion was playing the black side! I have heard that in Shogi material does not matter as much as in chess. This is because some pieces can be brought back onto the board after they have been taken. Maybe Black forgot he was playing chess and not Shogi. Yoshiharu Habu comes up with a unique plan in the opening that loses material but activates the black pieces, and wins a short and sweet game.

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♗f3 ♗f6 4. ♗c3 e6 5. e3 ♗bd7 6. ♗d3 dxc4 7. ♗xc4 b5 8. ♗e2 b4 9. ♗a4 ♗d6!?

A rare choice. This could be due to Habu's lack of opening preparation. In some exceptional cases, this can actually benefit a player as

he has to think for himself, rather than relying on the thoughts of others. The most common moves here are 9. ♖a5 and 9... ♗b7.

10. e4!? (D)



A brave choice. White senses that Black has drifted, and therefore forces matters.

A lot of top players have a great sense of timing; this stems from experience. Here, White spots that Black is forced to capture on e4, leaving e4 and c6 loose. However, Black gets some compensation in return.

10...♖xe4

It is interesting to note just how strong this knight is on e4 for the rest of the game.

11 ♖c2 f5

Black's hand is really forced now as he must keep going forwards to justify 9 ♖d6.

12 ♘g5!

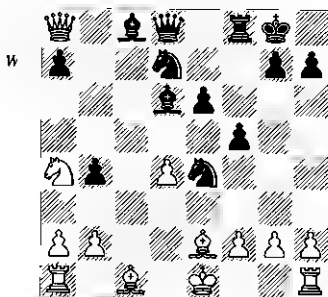
12 ♖xc6 ♖b8 13 ♖g5 ♖b7 = is a fruitless path for White because after 14 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 15 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 Black has no worries.

12...♗xg5 13 ♖xc6 ♖e4!

I believe that this move deserves an exclamation mark for boldness. It is probably possible for White to retain a material advantage after this move, and by doing so, keep an edge. However, things are not so simple in practical chess. Furthermore, by using the process of elimination, a very useful tool in calculating lines, Black really has to play this knight advance.

Black could try 13...♖b7, but after 14 ♖xd6 Black has lost all control of the dark squares, an important factor which makes matters unpleasant for him for the rest of the game. 14. ♖d5 is met by 15 ♖xb4 ±.

14 ♖xa8 0-0 (D)



15 ♖c6

The white queen makes a quick exit. Black was threatening 15... ♖c7 followed by 16 ...♖b7 and 17 ...♖a8.

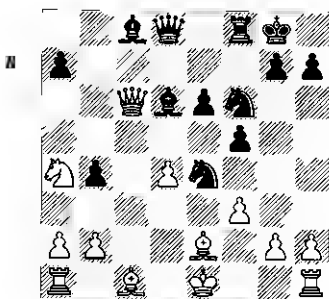
The computer's first choice is 15 ♖f3 (trying to grab more material on e4!) 15. ♖c7 16 ♖xe4 fxe4 17 ♖xe4 ♖f6 18 ♖f3 (18 ♖e2 ♖c6 =) 18. ♖c2!, when it is time to take stock of the position. Black has plenty of compensation. All his pieces are active and White has yet to castle. Black's most dangerous asset is his light-squared bishop, which is threatening to terrorize White on the light squares, especially on the f1-a6 diagonal. After 19 ♖b3 ♖e4+ 20 ♖e3 ♗g4 21 0-0-0 ♖xf2 22 ♖d2 (22 ♖xf2?! ♖f4+ 23 ♖d2 ♖xf2 +) Black can try 22... ♖xg2 or 22. ♖f7? 23 ♖he1 ♖c7+ 24 ♖c5 ♖xd4 25 ♖xb4, with unclear play in both cases.

15...♖df6

Reinforcements are needed!

16 f3?! (D)

It may have been more sensible for White to slow Black's play down with 16 ♖c2, when Black has compensation but there is no clear follow-up. It is important in chess to leave your opponent with hard choices to make over the board as this increases his chances of going wrong. 16 f3?! may still be OK for White but Black's play is much more forced and, therefore, easier.



This is a critical point. White has made another brave decision but it looks rather suspicious. The dark squares on White's kingside are seriously weakened. Black needs to take action here.

Can you see a way to keep the white king stuck in the centre? Do not worry too much about material; remember what chapter you are reading!

16...♔d7

16 ♔xh2! is best – well done if you spotted this move. This stops White from castling and allows the black queen to enter into the fray. After 17 ♔xh2 ♖xd4 Black achieves very active play by making use of White's exposed king. It looks like White is in trouble here, for example, 18 fxe4 ♗xe4 (18 ♖g1+ is also strong but less clear after 19 ♖d2) 19 ♖c4 ♗g1+ 20 ♔f1 ♗xh2 (20...♗f2+ also wins; Black's queen and knight are deadly) 21 ♖d3 ♖h4+ 22 ♖e2 ♔d8 and Black is completely winning.

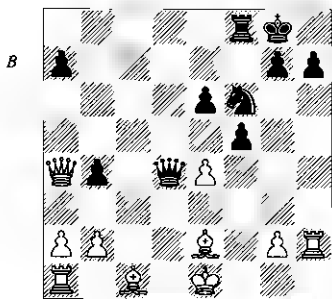
17 ♖a6 ♔xa4 18 ♖xa4 ♔xh2!

With the same ideas as before

19 ♔xh2

Matters do not improve for White. If he captures the big central knight on e4, then after 19 fxe4 ♔g3+ White's king has no chance of surviving against the combination of Black's queen, bishop and knight. Three pieces are attacking, which is the magic number. 20 ♖d1 ♖xd4+ 21 ♔d2 ♖xb2 (21...♔d8 is also good, for example, 22 ♖c2 ♗xe4 –+) 22 ♔c1 ♗xe4 –+

19...♖xd4 20 fxe4 (D)



Black has the option of recovering some material with 20...♖g1+. Would you go for the rook or play another move?

20...♗xe4!

Keeping the queen in a central position is a much better plan. Black's knight on e4 is a very strong piece. 20...♖g1+ 21 ♔f1 ♗xe4 is not as convincing, for example, 22 ♖c2 ♖xh2 23 ♔e3 with unclear play.

21 ♔h1?

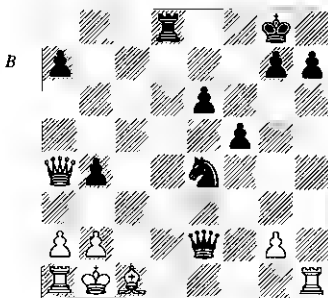
Under the spotlight, White cracks. A change of defence was possible with 21 ♖b5! (this is probably White's only try) 21 ♖g1+ 22 ♔f1 ♔d8 23 ♖e2 ♖xh2 ♖, when Black has three pawns for the piece whilst White's camp is lacking any coordination.

21...♗f2+ 22 ♖d1 ♔d8+

All of Black's attacking moves are very natural and all his pieces are aiming towards hunting the white king down.

23 ♖c2 ♖xe2+ –+ 24 ♖b1 (D)

Another option is 24 ♖b3. Try then to work out how to force checkmate. Each black move is a check: 24...♗d3+ 25 ♖xb4 ♔b8+ 26 ♖a5 ♗d8+ 27 ♖a6 ♖b6#.



White's king has wandered over to b1. At first sight it may look reasonably safe as it is surrounded by a mass of white pieces. However, the problem is that the king is now boxed in. Black can force the win here, and to make that possible the black rook needs to enter the game. How?

24...♗c3+!

Keep them coming! With this move, Black opens the b-file for his rook and creates a dangerous pawn on c3. Even though White is a large amount of material up, there is no way to escape.

25 bxc3 bxc3 26 ♔a3

Checkmate in five moves.

26...♔b8+ 27 ♖b3 ♗d3+ 28 ♖c1 ♗d2+ 0-1

White gave up before allowing 29 ♖b1 c2+ 30 ♖b2 c1♖#

7 Playing to Your Strengths

A chess player must realize what parts of his game are strong and which parts are weak. In many cases the positions that you enjoy playing will probably be the strongest part of your game. I enjoy messy positions and I tend to play reasonably well when the position is messy

In this chapter I have briefly described why it was a good choice for the player who wins the game to have aimed for the certain position that he did. When playing your own games, try to think what part of the game you play the best and if it is possible try to steer aim the game for that position. The weak points of your game should be looked at when you're at home – not during a competitive match'

Game 27

James Plaskett – Niaz Murshed

Dhaka 1997

Pirc Defence

Jim Plaskett is a unique person and this quality often shines through in his chess. When Jim plays well, he is unstoppable, firing pieces straight at his opponent, often with numerous sacrifices thrown in for good luck. Unfortunately, when Plaskett is not having a good day, he can lose to anybody.

This following game is an example of Jim at his best, playing to his strength, which is attacking. The way in which he makes things look so easy is impressive and his basic plan of mate down the h-file works out perfectly

One bit of advice: if you ever have the chance to face Plaskett (this has become less likely after he won £250,000 on 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' – I am sure he will be more than happy to tell you all about it), keep the position closed!

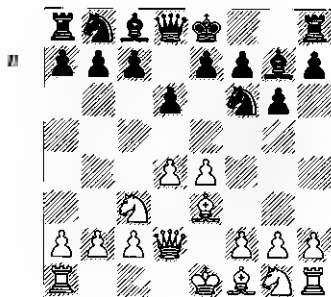
1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♟f6 3 ♟c3 g6

The Pirc is a 'come and get me' opening. Black basically asks White to come straight at him in the hope that a counterattack will be successful. We saw Black's counterattack plan work perfectly earlier in Parligras-Jobava (Game 6, in Chapter 2).

I am sure Jim loves playing against this opening as it gives him the chance to start attacking

first. In my opinion, this is a bad choice against Jim. Black should have considered his opening choice more carefully.

4 ♟e3 ♟g7 5 ♟d2 (D)



This line is sometimes called the '150 Attack', at least in British circles. The name stems from the claim the plan is so simple that it can be used effectively by players graded around 150 (ECF grading – equivalent to about 1800 Elo).

White's blunt plan runs something along the following lines. Wait until Black has castled,

and then play ♙h6 , h4 , h5 , hxg6 , ♙xg7 , ♚h6+ and mate!

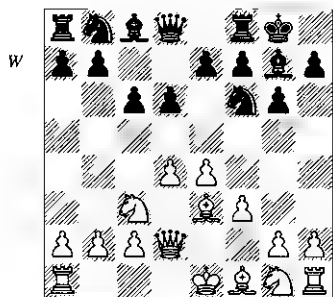
5...0-0

I always try to delay castling in such positions as White's plan becomes a lot easier after this. h4 h5 does not have the same punch if Black has left his king in the centre

6 f3

♙g4 can be annoying. 6 f3 stops this and allows White to launch an attack with g4 later on

6...c6 (D)



7 h4

A very straightforward plan which I am sure everyone has seen before. This adds to the attractiveness of playing such an opening because it is simple to learn. Black, on the other hand, must already be on his guard.

7...e5

At the time, this was a new move and a very logical one. The best way to meet a wing attack is with a central attack. $7...♙bd7$ is Black's other logical choice, but why not strike out immediately?

8 ♗e2 exd4

$8...b5!$?, attacking on the opposite flank, also looks like a plan.

9 ♖xd4 d5

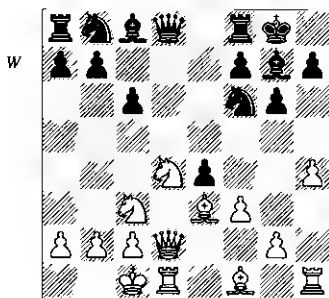
Black is playing logically, striking in the centre. Unfortunately, he is behind in development.

10 0-0-0

Straight to the point: White keeps developing. 10 e5? allows $10...♙h5$ ♚, when White

would like his h-pawn to be back on h2 . Black is threatening ♙xe5 and ♙g3

10...dxe4 (D)



What would you play here? The move chosen is not necessarily the best one, but it does fit well into White's set-up and the 'spirit' of the game. When players have castled on opposite sides, the attack is usually more important than material advantage. Any tempo you can gain is of the utmost importance, as it will speed the attack up.

11 ♙h6!

Eliminating the best defender of the black king. As soon as the bishop on g7 is gone, the dark squares become very weak. h5 is going to be a threat as it lets the h1 -rook join in the party. Tactical problems on the d file also arise. To make such a decision, a player needs a balance of calculation and intuition. Some lines need to be thoroughly analysed and if they look dangerous for your opponent and you like the resulting position, then go for it!

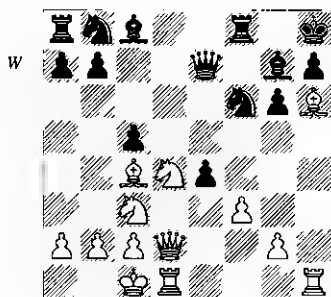
$11 \text{ ♙xe4 } 12 \text{ fxe4 } 12 \text{ fxe4}$ is a wetter option. While this is playable, and may not be worse than the game continuation, White will now find it hard to swap the dark squared bishops. Black should avoid $12...♙e8?$ $13 \text{ ♙c4! } 14 \text{ ♙xe4 } 15 \text{ ♙hf1}$ with a big attack, but 12 ♙g4 looks safer, after $13 \text{ ♙e2 } 14 \text{ ♙xe2 } 15 \text{ ♙xe2 } 16 \text{ ♙a5}$ = Black is fine.

11...♙e7

Black removes his queen from the d -file, as it may be a target for the white rook on d1 . Other options include $11... \text{exf3}$, simplifying matters but not in a great way. 12 ♙xg7 and now,

Developing a piece with check can't be bad.

14...♖h8 (D)



White has many tempting moves here. What would you play? Try to think how you could create a threat against h7.

15 ♗g5!

White's pieces are all incredibly active. This move creates a nasty threat against h7. 15 ♖db5 + and 15 ♖b3 are both safe options.

15...cxd4

Black really has to regain some material and pray.

16 ♖xh7+!

No backing down!

16...♖xh7

Or 16...♖xh7 17 ♖h1+ ♗h6 (after 17...♖h5 18 ♗xe7 dxc3 19 ♖d5 + White has too many threats) 18 ♗xb6 (not 18 ♗xf6?? e3 and Black wins) 18 ♖h5 19 ♖xe4 + -.

17 ♗xe7 dxc3 18 ♖d6 + -

Materially Black may be doing OK but his pieces are either undeveloped or placed on stupid squares, so the game is effectively over. The final moves were.

18...cxb2+ 19 ♖b1 ♖d7 20 ♖h1 1-0

Game 28

Alexei Shirov – Mark Blusvstein

Canadian Open, Edmonton 2005

Petroff Defence

A surprisingly short and probably painful loss for Shirov, as Blusvstein does a 'Planet Shirov' attack on the man himself!

This tactic of going straight for a player's throat, an approach that Shirov usually uses on his opponents, is rather unsettling so obviously a lot of care is needed. I think that Black made a good choice by grabbing the initiative first against such a formidable opponent. For me, this game is a great example of modern chess. Both sides take risks in order to unbalance the position, and the winning and losing margin is very small. In the end, calculation turns out to be the key.

It is worth noting the queen swing that Black does in this game, 13...♖e8 and 14...♖h5. I have used this plan myself in many games starting with the Classical Dutch and it has turned out to be a great attacking weapon.

The variations in this game have been analysed in more depth compared to other games

in this book because some of the permutations possible are fascinating.

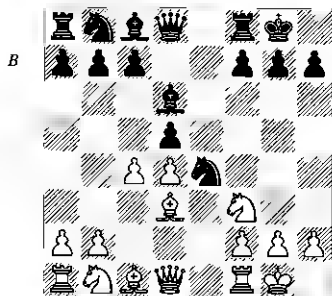
1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖f6 3 ♖xe5 d6 4 ♖f3 ♖xe4

The Petroff Defence has the reputation of being a boring opening. Nowadays, it is common place to see Black playing a solid system which gives him little chance of winning – that is, if White is unambitious. White will have to take risks in order to win, and in that case, Black can often obtain good counterchances. Black's opening is also a sensible choice against someone as tactically alert as Shirov, who plays complicated positions brilliantly.

This opening could be an example of 'playing the player'. Having said all that, things spice up very quickly!

5 d4 d5 6 ♗d3 ♗d6 7 0-0 0-0 8 e4 (D)

White's advantage often hinges on Black's pawn on d5 and whether he can remove the black knight from e4. Black, on the other hand, will try to prove that his knight on e4 is a strong



piece and a useful aid for a kingside attack. The black queen now has a possible route out to h4 and the f-pawn is free to move.

8...c6 9 ♖c2 ♠a6

A good, active move, developing a piece with tempo.

10 a3

White can't really do without this move. 10 ♠xe4? is risky because Black's pieces become very active; for example, 10...dxe4 11 ♖xe4 ♜e8 12 ♛c2 ♠b4 (each move from Black is coming with tempo) 13 ♛b3 (after 13 ♛c3 ♠g4 14 c5 ♠d5 15 ♛b3 ♠c7 Black has plenty of compensation, as all his pieces are useful whilst White's are mainly asleep) 13...♠f5 14 c5 ♠c2 ♠

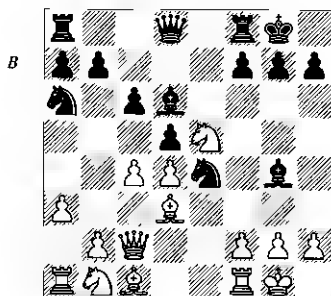
10...♠g4 11 ♠e5 (D)

11 ♠xe4? is again the wrong plan: 11...dxe4 12 ♛xe4 ♠xf3! 13 ♛xf3 (13 gxf3? just looks horrible!) 13...♛h4 14 h3 ♛xd4 ♠

11 c5? is probably strategically wrong. White should keep the tension and pressure against the d5-square. Now that the queenside is closed, Black has less to worry about on that side of the board so he can concentrate his forces on the kingside and centre.

11...♠f5

11...♠xe5? is another move with the idea of securing the c5-square for a knight, although it probably fails for tactical reasons. 12 dxe5 ♠ac5 13 f3! (13 b4 ♠xd3 14 ♛xd3 ♠f5 and Black is fine) 13...♠xd3 14 ♛xd3 ♠c5 15 ♛d4 ♠b3 16 ♛xg4 ♠xa1 17 ♠h6 ♛b6+ 18 ♠h1 g6 (Black's position looks very dodgy, especially as the dark squares around his king are very weak; the



knight on a1 is also looking rather lost) 19 ♛f4! ±.

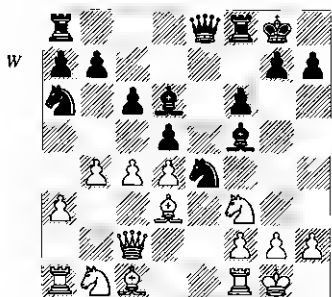
12 b4

Gaining space on the queenside. The main idea is to play b5 at some point, attacking Black's pawn structure on the light squares. If Black wastes time, his structure will collapse so he needs to take action, and the kingside is the logical place to start.

12...f6

12...c5 is a bizarre-looking idea that might just work: 13 cxd5 cxd4 (after 13...♠xe5? 14 dxe5 ♛xd5 15 ♠c3 ♠xc3 16 ♠xf5 ♛xe5 17 ♠xh7+ ♠h8 18 ♠b2 ± White's two bishops are very menacing) 14 ♠xe4 ♜c8 15 ♛d3 ♠e4 16 ♛xe4 ♜e8 and the position remains complex

13 ♠f3 ♛e8! (D)



Black's play is very energetic. He is slowly bringing all his pieces over towards the kingside. One reason why Black's attack works so

effectively here is due to White's queenside pieces, which seem to have fallen asleep.

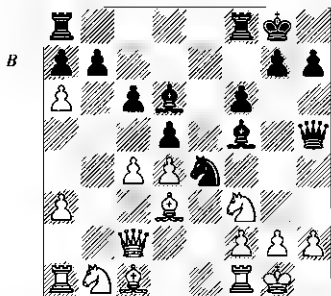
14 b5 ♖h5!?

Black realizes that it is time to strike, and any delay, even to save the odd piece, will just hold him back. I have noticed that many great attacking players such as Shirov find it very hard to deal with a mad attack. Indeed, most players, in general, find it hard to deal successfully with an all-out attack against them.

Black's attack works here because he has four aggressively-placed pieces whilst White's queenside pieces are resting.

15 bxa6 (D)

White could throw in 15 c5 but Black still has a strong attack after 15 ♖c7 16 bxa6 ♙g4



Black has sacrificed a piece in order to drum up some play against White's king. What should Black do next? Thinking logically, he would like to remove White's knight from f3, so that ... ♖xh2# will become possible.

15... ♙g4

Threatening 16 ♙xf3 and 17 ♖xh2#. The dark-squared bishop on d6 is White's major concern.

16 ♖e1

A few other moves require analysis:

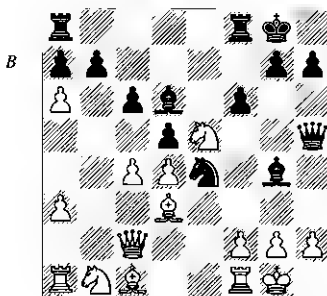
a) 16 h3 is asking for punishment. After 16 ♙xf3 White has several possibilities.

a1) 17 ♖e1 transposes to the note to White's 17th move.

a2) 17 gxf3? is suicidal. 17 ♙g5! 18 ♙f5 ♙xf3+ 19 ♖h1 ♙xd4 should be winning, while even 17 ♖xh3? 18 f4 f5 is strong.

a3) 17 ♙d2 ♙g5 gives Black an attack. This knight jump is a constant pain for White.

b) 16 ♙e5! (D) is an imaginative idea



White returns the piece so that the b8 h2 diagonal, White's main problem, can be temporarily closed. Unfortunately, for White, it seems that Black's attack is still too strong: 16... ♙e5 17 c5 (after 17 cxd5 exd4 18 h3 ♙xh3 Black is having all the fun) 17... ♙c7 18 axb7 (18 f3 exd4 19 h3 ♙xh3 and White's kingside is getting demolished) 18 ♙exd4 (re opening the bishop's diagonal) 19 h3 ♙xh3! 20 bxa8 ♙xg2 21 ♖xf8+ ♙xf8 22 ♖xg2 ♙g4+ 23 ♖h1 ♙h3+ 24 ♙g1 ♖h2#

c) 16 ♙bd2 ♙xd2 17 ♙xd2 ♙xf3 18 h3 (18 ♙xh7+ ♖h8 19 h3 f5 20 axb7 ♖ae8 21 c5 ♙b8 ♖, for example, if White tries to grab material with 22 gxf3 ♖xh3 23 f4 ♙g4+ 24 ♖h2 ♖f6 he will be punished) 18... f5! (Black intends to bring his rooks around to put pressure on White's king via e6 or f6; it is important to maximize the potential of all your pieces) 19 ♖fe1 ♙g6 20 ♙f1 ♙e4 gives Black a fair deal of pressure against the white kingside.

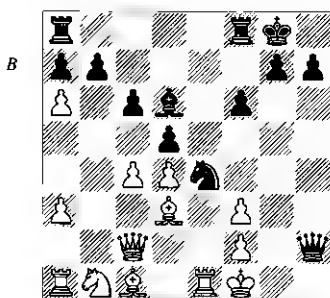
16... ♙xf3 17 gxf3!?

Brave and probably best. White can try to keep his kingside closed with 17 h3?!, but then 17 ♙g5! intends to crash through on the h3-square. 18 ♙f1? loses to 18 ♙xh3+! 19 gxf3 ♖ae8! with a crushing attack, so White must try 18 ♙xg5 ♖xg5 19 ♙xh7+ ♖h8 20 ♙g6, but he is struggling after 20... ♖f4 21 gxf3 ♖h2+ 22 ♖f1 ♖xh3+ 23 ♙g2 ♖xh7.

17... ♖xh2+!?

Again a very brave decision from Black. A draw was available with 17. ♖h3 18 fxe4 ♙xh2+ 19 ♖h1 ♙g3+ 20 ♖g1, when Black has run out of reserves and the best solution is to repeat the position with 20. ♙h2+ 21 ♖h1 ♙g3+.

18 ♖f1 (D)



Is Black forced to move his knight, or does he have another plan?

18...f5!

Black offers his knight on e4. In return he will gain the use of the f file, which will be a very useful attacking avenue for his rooks.

19 cxd5

The natural move was 19 axb7 and this might be best. Although 19...♖ae8 looks very unpleasant for White as Black now has the e-file under control, maybe White can defend with 20 ♖e3! (20 fxe4? is similar to the game after 20...fxe4 21 ♙xe4 dxe4 22 ♖e3 ♙g3 23 ♖a2 ♙f3) 20...♙f4!? (again Black has a draw available with 20...♙g3+, but fortune favours the brave; it is obviously very pleasant to be in a position where the option of taking a draw is available, as this 'bail-out' option means that the number of variations one has to analyse decreases) 21 cxd5 (21 fxe4? fxe4 22 ♙xe4 dxe4 23 ♖a2 ♙g3 →) 21...♙g3+ 22 fxg3 (22 ♖e1 cxd5 →) 22...♖h1+ and now:

a) 23 ♖f2? runs into mate in 8, as your computer will tell you. Fancy having a go at finding the mate? 23...♙xg3+ 24 ♙xg3 (24 ♖e2 ♖e1#) 24...f4+ 25 ♙g4 (or 25 ♖f2 fxe3+ 26 ♙xe3 ♙xf3+) 25...♖g1+ 26 ♖h5 (26 ♖h4 ♖g3+ 27

♖h5 ♖h3+ 28 ♖g5 h6+ 29 ♖g6 ♖f6#) and now the quiet 26...h6! ends the game.

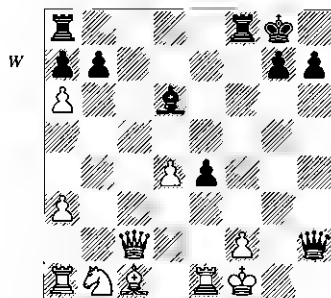
b) 23 ♖e2 ♖g2+ 24 ♖d1 ♖g1+ 25 ♖d2 ♙xe3+ 26 ♖c3 ♙xd4+ 27 ♖b3 ♙xa1 and although Black is material up, the position is very unclear after 28 dxc6. This line is, of course, very hard to calculate, especially when there are so many other options.

19...cxd5 20 fxe4

This appears to play into Black's hands, but inserting 20 axb7? ♖ae8 before playing 21 fxe4 (21 ♖e3 ♙g3!) fails to 21...♖h3+ (pushing the king to e2, 21...fxe4? 22 ♙xe4 dxe4 23 ♙e3 ♙g3 24 ♖a2 is unclear) 22 ♖e2 fxe4.

20 ♖a2 is a better way to prepare fxe4.

20...fxe4 21 ♙xe4 dxe4 (D)



The position has simplified and it is clear that White still has some major problems. For a start, he is left with a number of undeveloped pieces which will come into play far too late.

22 ♖e3 ♙g3 23 ♖a2?

For some reason, White has not made the capture on b7 throughout the whole game. Maybe his left eye was playing up and he could not see that far. Surprisingly, after 23 axb7 it would seem that the game is a draw. For example:

a) 23...♖ab8 24 ♖a2

b) 23...♖ad8 24 ♖a2 ♖f3 (24...♖h3+ 25 ♖e2 ♙xf2 26 ♙xf2 ♖g4+ {26...♖f3+ can be met by 27 ♖f1 or 27 ♖d2!}) 27 ♖f1 ♖h3+ 25 ♖b3+ ♖h8 26 ♖c2 ♙xf2 27 ♖xf2 ♖h3+ 28 ♖e2 ♙xf2+ 29 ♖d1+ is unclear. Black has to be brave to try this – and maybe a bit crazy.

c) 23. ♖xf2 24. ♕xf2 and here I cannot see a better continuation for Black than perpetual check with 24. ♖h3+ (24. ♖h1+ 25. ♖e2 and now 25... ♖f3+ 26. ♖f1 or 25. ♖h5+ 26. ♖f1 ♖h1+ 27. ♖e2) 25. ♖e2 ♖g4+ 26. ♖f1 ♖h3+ (not 26. ♖ae8? 27. ♖e3+).

23... ♖f3! 0-1

And all of a sudden White's position is hopeless. His resignation may be a little bit early but Black has many threats; for example, 24. ♖b3+ ♖h8 25. ♖c3 ♖h1+ 26. ♖e2 ♖xe3+! 27. ♖xe3 ♖xe1+ 28. ♖e2 ♕xf2+ winning.

Game 29

Peter Wells – John Emms

Redbus Knockout, Southend 2000

English Opening, Symmetrical

To play ...c5 or not to play. c5 – a common decision that chess-players have to face.

In this game White searches for the soul of the position and finds it. It involves Black's weakened dark squares and the need to stop ...c5. As soon as White does so, Black is contained to a passive role. This, combined with a sacrificial rampage, leaves Black dead.

One of Wells's main strengths is playing accurately and dynamically at the same time, a trait I am sure every one of us would love to have!

1. ♖f3 c5 2. e4 ♖c6 3. ♖c3 g6

3. ♖f6 may be slightly more accurate here, as White's next move seems to give him a pleasant opening edge.

4. e3! ♖f6

4... ♕g7 5. d4 d6 6. d5 + with a space advantage which should give White the preferable position.

5. d4 exd4 6. exd4 d5 (D)

Black should stop White from playing 7. d5 7. cxd5

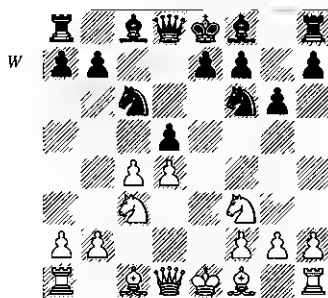
7. ♕g5 is a more critical option, which also looks rather nasty for Black, e.g., 7. ♖e4 8. cxd5 ♖xc3 9. bxc3 ♖xd5 10. ♖b3 ±.

7... ♖xd5 8. ♖h3 ♖xc3

Other knight moves run into 9. d5.

9. ♕c4!

A nice move. Black is now forced to play ...e6 at some point, which will weaken the dark squares around his king, in particular the f6- and d6 squares. After ...e6 he also no longer has the option of moving his light squared bishop out, therefore leaving it behind his pawns.



If you can ever create weaknesses for free in your opponent's position, then you should!

9... ♖d5!?

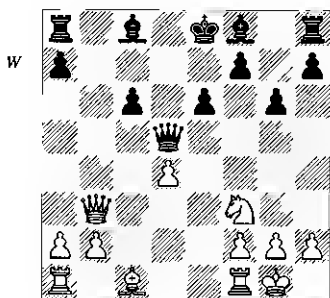
This looks best. Otherwise White would recapture the black knight by 10. bxc3, which gives him a strong pawn on d4. Now at least the pawn on d4 is not defended by any other pawns, leaving it a potential target for Black. 9... e6 10. bxc3 ♕d7 11. ♕e2 ±.

10. ♕xd5 e6 11. ♕xc6+ bxc6 12. 0-0 ♖d5 (D)

The black queen takes up a good central square. If I were White here, I would really like to force the black queen away from this square.

However, White has exchanged his light squared bishop so it will be hard to achieve this. He can probably only do so by an attack from the white knight or if a rook lands on c5 or e5. So these are two possible things that White should be thinking about.

Other plans for White involve swapping off the dark-squared bishops, after which Black's



weaknesses will become more difficult to defend. Another option is to start an attack on the c6-pawn

Black on the other hand has some pluses. The bishop pair is an obvious one and if he can ever play ...c5 his light-squared bishop will find a great diagonal along a8-h1. So right now, White must stop the ...c5 break.

13 ♙f4!

In positions such as this, White would like to retain the queens; this is due to a couple of factors:

1) After an exchange of queens, two bishops are generally better than a bishop and knight

2) It is harder to create threats on Black's dark squares and following this his king, without queens on the board

However, as we shall see, if Black now exchanges on b3, he will find it hard to defend his c6- and a7-pawns. Black seems to have fewer problems against other moves; for example, 13 ♜c3, and now,

a) 13... ♙g7 14 ♙f4 0-0 and then

a1) 15 ♙fc1 ♜d8 kept the balance in Rukavina-Belavsky, Sombor 1972

a2) 15 ♜e3!?, bringing the white queen over to help on the kingside, seems like a promising plan. This is thematic as White wants to swap the dark squared bishops 15...♜d8 16 ♙e5 f6 17 ♙c7 ♜d7 18 ♙g3 looks to be a slight edge for White as Black has more weaknesses, notably c6 and e6, but it is nothing to panic about

b) 13... f6, trying to cover some dark squares, weakens e6, but it is hard for White to attack this square without a light-squared bishop. After

14 ♙f4 + Black has a solid yet uninspiring position.

13... ♙e7

Or

a) 13... ♜xb3 is critical for reasons given above, but White has a pleasant advantage after 14 axb3 ♙g7 15 ♙fc1 (15 ♙d6?) 15... ♙b7 16 ♙e5 ±. Thus White's decision on the previous move he saw that Black could not afford to initiate the exchange of queens himself, so he did not have to take measures to avoid the exchange by moving his own queen

b) 13... f6 14 ♜e3 and now 14... ♙g7?! allows White to exchange dark squared bishops, after which the e5 square becomes a good home to a white rook: 15 ♙h6 0-0 16 ♙xg7 ♜xg7 17 ♙fc1 ♜b8 18 ♜c5 + and Black's remaining bishop is rendered useless, this, combined with his weak pawns, makes the position very hard to save. Black should instead play 14... ♙e7, seeking counterplay with either ...c5 or a king side advance with ...g5 and maybe ...h5

14 ♙fc1 f6 15 h4

This move fulfils a couple of functions. It stops ...g5 and later on in the game the push h5 may cause some weaknesses in Black's king-side pawn structure

15... ♙d7

Or:

a) 15... ♙f7? 16 ♜xd5 cxd5 17 ♜c7 ±.

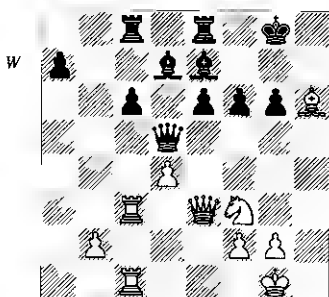
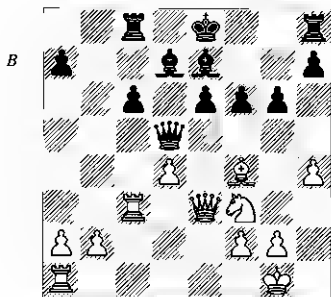
b) 15... ♜xb3? 16 axb3 ♙d7 17 ♙d2! (the knight has nowhere to go on f3; it is much better positioned over on the queenside) 17...h6 (intending 18 g5) 18 ♙c4 (18 ♙e4? ±) 18... ♙d8 ±

16 ♜e3 ♜c8 17 ♜c3 (D)

Black has two sensible moves in this position 17...0-0 and 17... ♙f7. Which one would you choose and why?

17...0-0?

17... ♙f7! is much better, leaving the rook on h8 to safeguard the kingside. The problem for White now is that he cannot stop ...c5, which will open the position for Black's bishops and solve the problem of Black's weak c6 pawn. For example, after 18 a3 c5! (Black must play this before White has a chance to play b4) 19 dxc5 ♙xc5 20 ♜e2 ♙b6 – Black has solved all his opening problems. Maybe the reason for



John Emms's mistake is that he played too stereotypically. He needed to look at the position in a fresh way to realize that the rook was needed on h8

18 ♖h6

Another reason why I dislike 17...0-0 is that this move comes with tempo.

18...♗fe8?

18...♗fd8! places the rook on a better location. It is always important to consider all your pieces and where they are best placed. On d8 the rook leaves room for the possible manoeuvre ♖e8 f7, which gives extra defence to the kingside and opens up the d-file for Black's rook.

19 ♖ac1!

A good decision. Black's only active break is ...c5 and White figures that it is worth sacrificing a pawn, and maybe more, to put a stop to this move. Black's pieces are also not well placed for the following attack whilst White's are all active. 19 a3? does not really bear thinking about as it allows all Black's dreams to come true with 19...c5! =.

19...♞xa2

Black at least grabs a pawn for his worries.

20 h5 ♞d5

The queen has to try to fight its way back over to the defence of the kingside. 20 ♞xb2? sharpens the game, but justifiably loses to the attractive 21 hxg6 hxg6 22 ♕e5! fxe5 23 ♞e4 ♕h7 24 ♕h3 +-.

21 hxg6 hxg6 (D)

What would you play as White now? The way White was thinking is as follows: "Black's

kingside is weak, especially g6. Black is lacking pieces around his king. The only real defender is the bishop on e7, which is holding the dark squares and stopping f6 from becoming a target. On the other hand my pieces are all well placed and it is hard to improve my position slowly. Therefore I must play dynamically with the move "

22 ♞c5!

A positional sacrifice to get rid of the dark squared bishop. Black's queen is also knocked off the active d5-square.

22...♞xc5 23 ♞xc5 ♞d6

Black can also try 23 ♞a2, but Black's king is naked and ready to be attacked, not a nice situation to be in. 24 ♞e4 takes advantage.

a) 24...♕h7 25 ♕h5! f5 26 ♞e5 ♕e7 27 ♞f6 gxf5 28 ♞xe7+ ♕xh6 29 ♞f6+ ♕h7 30 ♕g5+ ♕g8 31 ♞f7+ ♕h8 32 ♞h7#

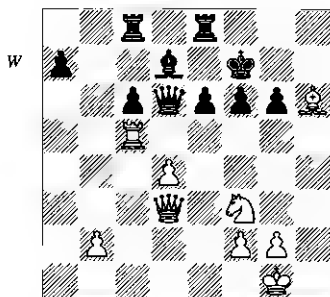
b) 24...♕f7 25 ♕g5+ ♕e7 (25...fxg5 26 ♞f3+ ♕e7 {26. ♕g8 27 ♞f6+ } 27 ♕xg5+ ♕d6 28 ♞f4+ e5 29 ♞xe5 ♞b1+ 30 ♕e1+ +-) 26 ♞xg6 ♞a1+ 27 ♕h2 ♞d1 28 ♞g7+ ♕d8 29 ♞xf6+ +- – dark-square domination

24 ♞d3 ♕f7 (D)

Black's other options were bad as well; for example,

a) 24. ♕h7 25 ♕h5! +.

b) 24...f5 25 ♕e5 +. Positionally Black is busted. As Peter himself said here, "This is the bit the attacker can do intuitively. If Black is forced to play f5 here then the compensation does not need to be finely calculated – it will work on positional grounds alone."



Have a look at all checks and captures and see if there is a way to break through to the black king

25 ♖e5+!

The final straw for Black. White forces the opening of the black king, just look at how the dark squares crumble. White needed to play this move as there was no other way to continue the attack.

This is a good example of why checks, captures and forcing moves should be looked at before anything else.

25...fxe5

After 25 . ♖e7, 26 ♙f4! + is a cute way of winning

26 ♖f3+ ♖g8

26 .. ♖e7 allows 27 ♙g5#.

You should be able to work out how to win from here; just keep looking at ways to force mate!

27 ♖f6 ♖e7

27 .. ♖e7 28 ♖xg6+ ♖h8 29 ♙g5 +.

28 ♖xg6+

28 ♖c3!, swinging the rook around via the third rank, is also strong.

28... ♖h8 29 ♖f6+ ♖h7

29 . ♖g8 30 ♖c3 +.

30 ♙f8

30 ♖xe5 or 30 ♖c3 is quicker but the move chosen wins just as easily.

30... ♖xf8

30. ♖b8 31 ♖c3

31 ♖xf8

Black is running out of moves. He would prefer not to have a bishop on d7, since at least then he could play . ♖d7.

31... ♙e8 32 ♖c3 exd4 33 ♖h3+ ♖g6 34 ♖h6+ 1-0

The end would have been 34... ♖g5 35 ♖f6+ ♖g4 36 ♖h4# – nasty!

Game 30

Miguel Illescas Cordoba – Ulf Andersson

Ubeda 1997

Sicilian Defence, Sozin Attack

And now for something completely different ..

This is an amazing game, but not for the same reasons as most of the other games in this book. Ulf Andersson was considered at his prime to be one of the best, if not the best, defenders in the world. He often used this skill to hold positions where he was being attacked from all angles

More times than most he would survive and then have the advantage in the ending, which he would duly convert into victory. His philosophy was not that he should play the best move but rather, 'not to play a bad move'. It was no coincidence that this was normally the best move anyway!

This is a typical game from Ulf where he holds on. When his opponent's pieces have tired, he then counter-attacks with force.

One of things I especially like about this game is the way that Black sacrifices his pawns. He does not do it in the conventional way to attack. On two separate occasions he allows White to take a pawn with check in order to get his king safe and open up play for his pieces.

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 e6

Nowadays Ulf prefers to play a French Defence or Caro-Kann set up. Here he picks the Sicilian Defence. White has more active pieces

but Black has more pawns in the centre – a useful plus if he can survive the early onslaught

6 ♖c4

The most aggressive post for White's light-squared bishop.

6...a6 7 0-0

7 ♖b3 is more popular as it keeps White's options open, but there is nothing wrong with casting.

7...♙e7

7...♘bd7?! allows White to play the thematic 8 ♙xe6, which is very dangerous for Black; for example, 8...fxe6 9 ♖xe6 ♜a5 10 ♘d5.

8 ♙b3 ♘c6

8...b5 and 8...0-0 are Black's other sensible options.

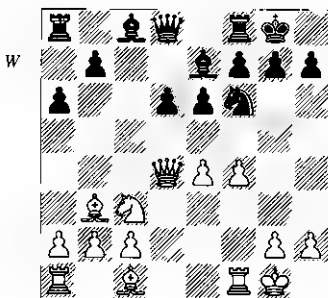
9 f4 ♘xd4!?

This was unusual at the time. A more topical choice was 9 0-0 10 ♙e3 ♘xd4 11 ♙xd4 with a typical Sicilian position

10 ♜xd4

At least this way Black hasn't permitted White's bishop to reach d4, where it seems to be well placed.

10...0-0 (D)



11 f5!?

A typical position and one that is important for any Sicilian player to understand.

White wants to throw everything at the black king. 11 f5 is an attempt to open the a2-g8 diagonal for White's light squared bishop. It is also trying to weaken the structure around Black's king.

White normally then continues with the rook swing ♙f3-g3/h3, when g7 and h7 become targets.

Black, on the other hand, normally counter-attacks with the pawn-break ...b5 or sometimes ...d5, trying to get counterplay on the queenside and in the centre, where he is strongest. The e5-square is also useful for Black and a great outpost for a knight.

So we have an unbalanced position

11...♜h8?!

A brave move. Black has faith that his king can look after itself on h8. On the downside this loses a tempo and it is not clear if the king is better on g8 or h8. Other options for Black were.

a) 11... ♜c7 12 ♜h1 (12...d5 was the idea) 12... b5 13 ♙g5 ♙b7

b) 11 ♙g4!? looks interesting; for example, 12 ♜h1 ♙f6 13 ♜d1 ♙e5 with unclear play

12 ♜h1 ♙d7 13 ♙g5

13 fxe6? is a mistake as the f-pawn may be used for other purposes. For example, f6 may be a good attacking move later on. Do not relieve the tension in the position unless there is a good reason to do so. After 13...fxe6 Black is no worse.

13...♜a5

...e5 is nearly always a positional mistake unless Black can continue with ...d5 or put adequate pressure on e4. The reason why ...e5 is normally a mistake is that it hands over the d5-square to White. Unless Black can get positional compensation in exchange, it is not worth doing. Thus Black avoids 13...e5? 14 ♜d3 +.

14 ♜ad1

White can try to win a pawn with 14 ♙xf6 but after 14...♙xf6! (14...gxf6 intending ♜e5 is also possible) 15 ♜xd6 ♜ad8 ♢ Black has plenty of compensation; just look at the dark squares.

14...♜ad8

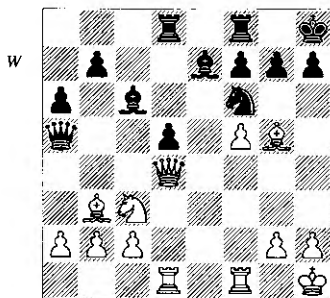
Black is playing a waiting game. He is placing his pieces where they belong so when the game opens up he is ready.

15 ♜d3 exf5!?

Both sides' light-squared bishops improve after this exchange

16 exf5 ♖c6 17 ♖d4?!

Losing tempi in such high-octane positions is not wise. It is worth trying to think what the best attacking formation is here. White could have started to aim at h7 with 17 ♖h3. Now that the black king is on h8, this looks good. The simple idea is to swing a rook over to h4 and then to deliver checkmate against the black king. Surprisingly, Black has many resources; for example, 17...d5 18 ♖f4 ♖g8! (this may be the only way that Black can survive but it does involve a nasty trick) 19 ♖h4? (after 19 ♖fd4 ♖fe8 = Black has nothing to fear) 19...♗e4! ♠.

17...d5 (D)

Now Black shuts out *both* players' light-squared bishops.

18 ♖h4

18 ♖fe1 is met by 18...♗c7 (the queen is needed to hold the dark squares; not 18...♖fe8?? 19 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 20 ♖xf6 +-) 19 ♖h4 ♖fe8 =.

18...♖fe8

A lot of Black's counterplay stems from the open e-file.

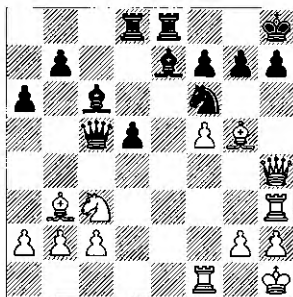
19 ♖d3

Logical; the idea is straightforward: 20 ♖h3, 21 ♖xf6 and 22 ♖xh7#.

19 ♖fe1?! ♗c5 (19...♖g8!?) 20 ♖e5? (20 ♖e3) fails to 20...♗e4! 21 ♖xe4 (21 ♖xe7 ♗f2+ 22 ♖g1 ♖xe7! 23 ♖xe7 {23 ♖xe7 ♗h3++} 23...♗xd1+ 24 ♖h1 ♗f2+ 25 ♖g1 ♗h3++ 26 ♖f1 ♖g1+ -+) 21...dxe4 22 ♖xd8 ♖xd8! 23 ♖xd8 ♖xf5 24 ♖g1 e3! -+.

19...♗c5 20 ♖h3 (D)

B



Things look pretty grim and Black can only survive by playing one plan. Amazingly, this plan gives him a good position. Can you see what Black's only move is?

20...♖g8!

Andersson must have seen this defensive idea a while back. It looks like desperation as his king is chased away to the queenside, but it remains safe throughout. The main reason why it is safe is due to the dark-squared bishop. It defends everything and makes room for the black king to scuttle away.

The text-move is forced, but that is often the way in chess. 20...h6? loses to 21 ♖xh6 +-.

21 ♖xf6?!

This obvious capture may well be a mistake! White should try to retain his dark-squared bishop if he is to have any chance of checkmating the black king.

21 ♖g3! is best answered by the paradoxical 21...♖h8! =, when a draw looks like a fair result. It is amusing watching how the black king does its shuffle! 22 ♖h3! (22 ♖e1 ♖f2!?) 22...♖g8!, etc.

21...♖xf6

g7 is well defended now.

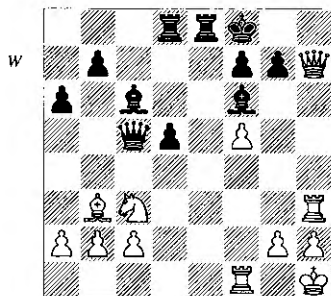
22 ♖xh7+ ♖f8 (D)

In compensation for his pawn, Black has great control over the dark squares and the centre, and better, more centralized pieces. On top of all this, White has major problems with his back rank. Not a bad exchange for a pawn!

23 ♖h8+

Or 23 ♖h5 ♖e5 with counterplay.

23...♖e7 24 ♖h5



24 ♖e1+?? ♔d7.

24...♗d7!

Defending f7 and making a route for the black king, i.e. d8, etc.

25 ♖e1?

By swapping off this rook, White gives himself problems on the back rank. White should have thought about playing 'Ulf-like' moves! 25 ♖d1 is better. Here the queen defends a lot of weaknesses but I still like Black's position after the simple 25...♔d8. Black has the pleasant break ...d4 at some point. All of Black's pieces are working long, whereas some of White's are looking lost, such as the b3-bishop and the h3-rook.

25...♔d8 26 ♖xe8 ♔xe8 27 ♖h8+?!

Another mistake. I am not sure if White was still trying to checkmate Black, but this is very hard to achieve just with a queen.

27...♔e7 28 ♔d1

28 ♖h5 was probably the best move but chess-players hate admitting their mistakes! After 28...♔d8, Black has just a slight advantage.

28...d4 ♠

Unleashing the light-squared bishop.

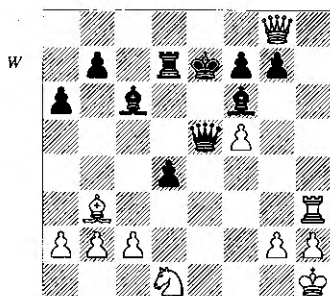
29 ♖g8

Very optimistic. Black's king is well-defended and can always run to b6.

29...♖e5 (D)

29...♖xf5 was also very strong; for example, 30 ♖xf7+ ♔d8 31 ♖c4 ♖e7 -+.

30 ♖xf7+



Another example of allowing White to take a pawn with check! Each time though White's pieces are becoming more disorganized.

30...♔d8 31 ♖h8+ ♔c7

Safe!

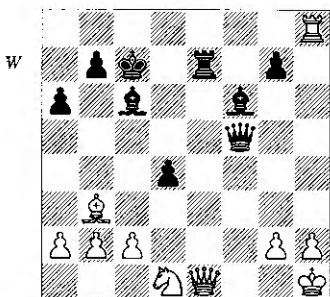
32 ♖e8

White is over-extended, and it is time for the counter-attack.

32...♖xf5 33 ♖e1

33 ♖b8+ ♔b6 – Black's king has kept to the dark squares throughout the game and here it is perfectly safe.

33...♖e7 -+ (D)



Every black piece is just itching to go!

34 ♖g3+ ♔b6 35 ♖c4 ♖xc2 36 ♖b3 0-1

White resigned without waiting for the conclusion 36...♖xg2+ 37 ♖xg2 ♖e1#.

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